

Anonymous Needlework: Uncovering British Patchwork 1680-1820

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Submitted to the University of Hertfordshire in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the degree of PhD

May 2014

Abstract

During the eighteenth century there was a significant growth in patchwork materially and linguistically. It was the century when patchwork was stitched at all levels of society and has been identified as the time when patchwork moved out from the small domestic world of decorative sewing into the wider public sphere, leaving behind other needlework as it became embedded in the language and writing of the period.

This research examines the social and cultural contexts relating to the making of patchwork in the long eighteenth century and in doing so contributes to the story of women and their material lives in the period. Noted for its longevity, surviving as a widespread practice across the century, patchwork was a democratic needlework that was practiced by any woman capable of stitching a variety of fabric pieces together to make a larger whole.

A widespread understanding of the term and familiarity with the practice enabled it to be employed successfully in the literal and figurative language of the period. Patchwork was heralded as a fashionable activity in the early eighteenth century, but was later used to represent the ideal of the moral and capable housewife, devoted to her sewing skills and thrifty in her practice. The figurative style of the period allowed the simultaneous use of the word in differing ways so that patchwork was used both positively and negatively in literature, drama, critical review, political debate and theoretical discourse.

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Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Professor John Styles for making available his deep knowledge of the eighteenth century and encouraging me to explore its material world.

Many thanks go to him and Dr. Sarah Lloyd for their knowledge, experience, patience and understanding.

Many museum curators and private owners have shared their patchwork and quilt collections with me over the years and I am grateful for their generous offers of help and time.

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Peter, whose encouragement started me on this path and to Patrick and Jane for their constant support and love.

Introduction

In June 1795, Anna Margareta Larpent stitched a patchwork workbag. A fashionable, but also domestically-engaged woman of the late eighteenth century, she noted this as an unremarkable piece of needlework, which was listed amongst the other plain and decorative sewing projects that were recorded in her daily journal.¹ Significantly she made nothing of the task and provided no information about the workbag's design or comment on her progress, in contrast to the other craft or sewing activities, including paper mosaic and decoupage, which she experimented with at the time and commented on at length.

This single instance highlights the inadequacies of some documentary evidence, which have previously discouraged a wide-ranging study of eighteenth-century patchwork. In the recent past, two widely-quoted references have been brought together with a small number of iconic patchwork objects of the period in order to demonstrate that patchwork was practiced in the long eighteenth century. Jonathan Swift's use of patchwork to describe the look of the set of clothes made for Lemuel Gulliver by Lilliputian tailors, provided confirmation that patchwork was a familiar word in the early eighteenth century.² Nearly ninety years later, Jane Austen corresponded with her sister Cassandra enquiring about the patchwork pieces required for their latest sewing project and demonstrated that patchwork was popular needlework amongst her social class.³ Further exploration of the contexts that relate to the making of patchwork in the period has been limited.

It was not until a resurgence of interest in quilting during the last three decades of the twentieth century that authors began to recognise a strong British heritage of quilting and appreciate the history of the related craft of patchwork. This thesis builds on recent work in order to uncover the social and cultural contexts relating to its making in the eighteenth century and re-position patchwork in the needlework practice of the period. Importantly it considers why a

¹ The domestic life of Anna Margareta Larpent will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4 *Patchwork in the Domestic Context*; The Diaries of Anna Margareta Larpent 1790-1830 are held in the Huntington Library, California, USA, ref. HM 31201; Microfilm of the journals can be seen at the British Library M1016/1-7. In this chapter, the latter reference number has been used as here: M1016/1, Vol. 1, 19 June 1795

² He said that they 'looked like the Patch-Work made by the Ladies in England, only that mine were all of a colour.', J. Swift, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon and Then a Captain of Several Ships*, (London, 1726) I.vi., p.109

³ 'Have you remembered to collect peices [sic] for the Patchwork? – We are now at a stand still.' Friday 31 May 1811, D. Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.191

single needlework technique was practised by women from all levels of society and what external factors contributed to its on-going popularity throughout the century. In parallel, it explores the place of patchwork in the language of the day and examines the reasons for the term moving from the domestic world to feature extensively in eighteenth-century figurative language.

The thesis is a study of British patchwork although very few non-English documentary sources were found. However the majority of surviving patchwork objects have arrived at the present day with no provenance details and could have been made in any of the countries in Great Britain or, indeed, in colonial North America. The justification for the innate ‘Britishness’ of the topic is that women’s needlework practice was not limited to an area within English borders; the British, their letters and publications moved back and forward at will over the countries during the century. The larger urban centres outside England, such as Dublin and Edinburgh, had similar sophisticated commercial, social and cultural lives while popular leisure pursuits were the same across the realm.

A period of one hundred and forty years is covered by this thesis stretching from the era of upheaval in the years just before the Glorious Revolution into the period of industrial change spanning the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. The evidence from a very small number of publications and inventories prompted the extension of the research back into the last two decades of the seventeenth century, although no British patchwork objects have been dated from this time.

The end of the second decade in the nineteenth century is an appropriate period to complete the study since, five years after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, marked social, cultural and technological changes altered the contexts in which patchwork was made. Other kinds of decorative needlework became popular with middling and gentry women. Improvements in roller printing techniques meant that printed cotton cloth was being produced in much greater quantities and cheaper cotton no longer had the fashionable status noted at times in the previous century. As a result women in better circumstances increasingly rejected both cotton and the patchwork made from it.

Patchwork consists of pieces of cloth sewn together to make a larger whole. When describing Gulliver's clothes, Jonathan Swift understood that patchwork was a needlework technique that used a variety of coloured fabrics. Dr Johnson also used this interpretation of patchwork in his dictionary definition 'work made by sewing small pieces of different colours interchangeably together.'⁴ In this context patchwork could range from the use of random scraps of fabric crudely joined together to create a piece of cloth to a decorative needlework stitched using selected fabric shapes and colours to achieve a pleasing design. The thesis considers the argument that this broad interpretation of the term is one of the main reasons why it could be said to have been practised across the period by all social classes, unlike other decorative needlework and craft techniques of the time.

This study of patchwork contributes to the story of women and their material lives in the eighteenth century. It engages with recent work focused on consumption practices in the eighteenth century and examines the ability of women to adapt to changing times and engage with new commodities, in particular their changing tastes for textiles. Patchwork, by its very nature, is ideally positioned to evidence this change.

Because of its ubiquity across the period, the technique is significant in the studies of the needlework practice of plebeian working women as well as women from higher up the social scale. Patchwork was employed by authors, such as Sarah Trimmer, to promote the positive benefits of domestic efficiency and economy. Consequently the thesis contributes to the debate concerning eighteenth-century attitudes toward the management and education of the labouring poor.⁵

Patchwork as domestic needlework has relevance when examining how women negotiated their way through the limitations of their lives at home. Recent writing has outlined the negative effects on women who were expected to occupy the domestic sphere. It has highlighted the association of needlework with the characteristics of acceptance and passivity, but this thesis provides an opportunity to examine whether, in practice, some women used

⁴ Dr. Johnson, , *A Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are Deduced from their Originals*, (London, 1755), Vol. II, p.291

⁵ S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or an Address to Ladies concerning Sunday-Schools; the Establishment of Schools of Industry under Female Inspection; And the Distribution of Voluntary Benefactions*, (Dublin, 1787); S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or, An address to Ladies; adapted to the Present State of Charitable Institutions in England*, (London, 1801)

needlework to provide space for socialising, contemplation and consolation. Patchwork is considered as evidence that needlewomen accepted the unavoidable load of needlework and worked their way through the tasks of making and mending to find pleasure in their creativity.

Studies of girls' education have recognised the restricted nature of school curricula throughout most of the eighteenth century, although more recent work has noted a gradual widening of the curriculum in the later decades of the period. Changes in patchwork design through the century suggest an increased level of knowledge of practical geometry and should be considered in the light of this expansion of girls' educational opportunities.

Patchwork in the History of Needlework

Throughout the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, it would appear that patchwork had faded gradually into anonymity. Changes in social and cultural attitudes contributed to it becoming regarded as an old-fashioned technique which was associated with the ethics of making-do and recycling so that patchwork was placed below the 'fine' needlework of art embroidery in the hierarchy of decorative domestic needlework.⁶

In 1882, Caulfeild and Saward published their comprehensive dictionary of needlework, which contained all the plain and decorative sewing techniques that would have been of use to their middle class readership.⁷ Their work promoted 'ornamental' needlework during a period when there was still a taste for fancy work despite the influences of the Arts and Crafts movement that saw a change in needlework styles by the end of the nineteenth century.⁸ Patchwork features over seven pages in the dictionary and is described having advantages since it is 'useful and ornamental' and uses 'odds and ends of silk, satin, or chintz that would otherwise be thrown away'. The majority of the patterns and techniques described small projects

⁶ An article on patchwork by Dora de Blaquiere published in a girls' magazine in 1880 said 'Patchwork has been looked upon as somewhat old-fashioned lately, in the light of crewels and art needlework, but it is so useful an assistant in teaching children to work, in giving instruction in neatness and deftness of fingering, that it has always, and will always, keep its place in the course of tuition in schools for plain needlework.' *The Girls Own Paper*, Vol. 1, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1880)

⁷ S. F. A. Caulfeild and B. C. Saward, *The Dictionary of Needlework: An Encyclopaedia of Artistic, Plain and Fancy Needlework*, (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1882)

⁸ Patterns and methods for fancy work needlecraft were also published at the same period in the part-works of *Weldon's Practical Needlework* as well as weekly and monthly magazines such as *Family Friend*, *The Girls Own Paper*, *The Bazaar*, and *Artistic Amusements*.

to be made in silk, satin, velvet and even kid or leather, although cotton cretonne, twill or chintz were listed as suitable 'for carriage rugs, couvrepieds and poor peoples' quilts'.⁹

By the end of the nineteenth century however, patchwork had disappeared from most texts that considered the history of needlework. Influential decorative artist Lewis F. Day (1900) referred to an inlay technique as 'a sort of PATCHWORK' that was worked in India and also used by the Spanish and Italians during the Renaissance without recognising the British tradition.¹⁰ Jourdain (1910) mentioned patchwork techniques used in the fourteenth and sixteenth century, but not later, with the exception of Catherine Hutton's (1756-1846) reminiscence about making patchwork from seven years old to eighty five.¹¹

Early twentieth-century textbooks for sewing in schools were dominated by authors from the Glasgow School of Art such as Margaret Swanson and Ann MacBeth. They did not include patchwork and quilting as suitable needlework projects for children.¹² The Royal School of Needlework only taught embroidery, whilst ignoring patchwork. Both it and the Embroiderers' Guild had royal patronage demonstrating the high status of such needlework. They together with the Glasgow School influenced the plans to establish a Needlework Development Scheme in the 1930s in order to raise the standard of art embroidery in art colleges and teacher training colleges and so influence the next generation of needlewomen.

In such a climate, it is not surprising that A.F. Kendrick, an authority on textile history, was blind to the merits or even the existence of patchwork during the eighteenth century. He gave only fleeting mention to quilting at that period. His *English Decorative Fabrics of the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century* (1934) focused only upon embroideries, tapestries, carpets and Turkey-work, despite the fact that he was Keeper of Textiles at the Victoria and Albert museum and would have been aware of early accessions into the textile department including an early

⁹ Caulfeild and Saward, *The Dictionary of Needlework*, (1882), p.379

¹⁰ L. F. Day and M. Buckle, *Art in Needlework A Book about Embroidery*, (London: B. T. Batsford, 1900), p.156

¹¹ M. Jourdain, *The History of English Secular Embroidery*, (London: Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1910), pp.20, 54, 108;

¹² M. Swanson and A. Macbeth, *Educational Needlecraft*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911); M. Swanson, *Needlecraft in the School*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1916); M. Swanson, *Needlecraft for Older Girls*, (Longmans, Green and Co., 1920)

eighteenth-century silk patchwork coverlet and a set of cotton clamshell-design patchwork bed hangings.¹³

Kendrick's legacy was that later authors continued this theme, although the field was small, culminating in Marsh (2006), who published two books on eighteenth and nineteenth century embroidery techniques; patchwork only features in the nineteenth-century book.¹⁴ Seligman and Hughes's 1926 overview of the origins and customs of domestic needlework focuses on embroidery, in particular raised work and samplers from the seventeenth and eighteenth century.¹⁵ Symonds and Preece (1928) referenced Persian Resht patchwork and noted that American quilting after the Revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was 'sometimes combined with patchwork'.¹⁶ Patchwork features occasionally in later texts detailing British historic needlework such as Hughes (1961), Snook (1978), Synge (1982), and King and Levey (1993), but the coverage tends to be superficial.¹⁷ Hughes devotes a chapter to quilting and patchwork, but suggested that patchwork was popular only from early in the reign of George III onwards and 'it has been impossible to find proof positive for an English emigrant origin for the great patchwork tradition in the United States of America'.¹⁸ More texts cover specific embroidery techniques, particularly samplers, such as, Humphrey (1997, 2002), Browne and Wearden (2002), and Scott (2012) and also include numerous exhibition catalogues.¹⁹ In her study of the history of embroidery Parker (1984) traced society's perception of femininity. She

¹³ A. F. Kendrick, *English Embroidery*, (London: Georges Newnes, 1905); A. F. Kendrick, *English Needlework*, (London: A&C Black, 1933); A. F. Kendrick, *English Decorative Fabrics of the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, (Benfleet, Essex: F. Lewis, 1934); silk patchwork coverlet, Collection of V&A 1475-1902 and clamshell-design patchwork bed hangings, Collection of V&A 242-F-1908

¹⁴ G. Marsh, *18th Century Embroidery Techniques*, (Lewes: Guild of Master Craftsmen Publications Ltd., 2006); G. Marsh, *19th Century Embroidery Techniques*, (Lewes: Guild of Master Craftsmen Publications Ltd., 2006)

¹⁵ G. S. Seligman and T. Hughes, *Domestic Needlework: Its Origins and Customs throughout the Centuries*, (London: Country Life, 1926)

¹⁶ M. Symonds (Mrs Guy Antrobus) and L. Preece, *Needlework Through the Ages A Short Survey of its Development in Decorative Art*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), pp.308, 315,

¹⁷ T. Hughes, *English Domestic Needlework*, (London: Lutterworth Press, 1961); B. Snook, *English Historical Embroidery*, (London: B. T. Batsford, 1978); L. Synge, *Antique Needlework*, (Poole: Blandford, 1982); D. King and S. Levey, *The Victoria and Albert Museum Textile Collection Embroidery in Britain from 1200 to 1750*, (London: V&A Publications, 1993)

¹⁸ Hughes, *English Domestic Needlework*, (1961), pp.136-53

¹⁹ C. Humphrey, *Samplers*, (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, 1997); C. Browne and J. Wearden, *Samplers from the Victoria and Albert Museum*, (London: V&A Publishing, 2002); C. Humphrey, *Quaker School Girl Samplers from Ackworth*, (Needleprint and Ackworth School Estates, 2006); R. Scott, *Samplers*, (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2012)

included two chapters covering women's needlework in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and concentrated upon plain sewing, crewel work, samplers and pictorial embroidery.²⁰

Due to the continued twentieth-century hierarchical attitude to needlework where embroidery was at the top and the unfashionable needlework, seen as work made in poverty, was at the bottom, the study of quilting in its broadest sense has been poorly documented and few texts cover this area. The majority of authors concentrate upon quilting as opposed to patchwork, including Hake (1937), FitzRandolph (1954), Colby (1965, 1972) and Osler (1987). None offer many references to the eighteenth century.²¹ Only one author, Averil Colby (1958), has published a book on the history of patchwork, together with an analysis of techniques and patterns, but her chapter devoted to the eighteenth century runs to eight pages.²²

Colby concentrated on listing a number of eighteenth-century examples including the Levens Hall patchwork quilt and bed curtain c. 1708 (collection of Levens Hall, Cumbria), a west country quilt with patchwork border (collection of the Royal Albert museum, Exeter, Devon), a patchwork chair seat cover (collection of University for the Creative Arts, Farnham), a cotton patchwork coverlet of c. 1790 (collection of Madingley Hall, Cambridge) and four pieces from the Victoria and Albert museum, London. The restricted number of examples did not allow her to reach any significant conclusions about patchwork at this time.

Later books on patchwork and quilting tend to reference back to earlier texts and confined patchwork in the eighteenth century to the mention of the small number of well-known surviving objects.²³ In the early 1990s, The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles carried out a documentation project recording over four thousand items, including quilts, coverlets, tops and small items, made using the techniques of patchwork, quilting and appliqué before 1960. Their

²⁰ R. Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, (London: The Women's Press Ltd., (1984)

²¹ E. Hake, *English Quilting Old and New with Notes on its West Country Tradition*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1937); M. FitzRandolph, *Traditional Quilting: Its Story and Practice*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1954); A. Colby, *Quilting*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972); D. Osler, *Traditional British Quilts*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1987)

²² A. Colby, *Patchwork*, (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1958)

²³ J. Rae, *The Quilts of the British Isles*, (London: Constable, 1987)

book, *Quilt Treasures* (1995) gives an overview of the project, but found only a limited number of examples from the eighteenth century.²⁴

The British Quilt Study Group was formed in 1999 and, since then, research papers have been published in its annual journal, *Quilt Studies*.²⁵ The oldest-known, British patchwork with a date, the 1718 silk patchwork coverlet, was acquired for The Quilters' Guild museum collection in 2000 and research into the coverlet's provenance, maker(s), techniques and design inspiration were published in *Quilt Studies* in 2003.²⁶ This research has encouraged further papers concentrating upon patchwork from the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.²⁷ It is in these more recent publications that efforts have been made to understand the social status of the makers of eighteenth-century patchwork and the context in which patchwork was sewn.

This work was continued in the catalogue that was published to accompany a major exhibition of quilts at the Victoria and Albert museum in 2010.²⁸ Contributing authors recognised the need to relate the textile objects to the social and cultural history of their time and the importance of connecting material and documentary evidence. Using examples of eighteenth-century patchwork and drawing upon contemporary texts, they confirm the presence of patchwork as a popular form of needlework in the period, but also indicated that there is much more to learn.

Documenting Patchwork in the Context of Material Cultural Studies

Many texts on historical needlework merely list the objects that survive with little physical description and without going further into the history to be found around them. It is logical therefore to move on to the theory of documenting objects that has evolved out of material culture studies. Material culture literature, much of which comes from North America,

²⁴ J. Rae et al., *Quilt Treasures: The Quilters' Guild Heritage Search*, (London: Deirdre McDonald Books, 1995)

²⁵ The papers include one which considers an eighteenth century object; J. Barber, 'Fabric as Evidence: Unravelling the Meaning of a Late Eighteenth Century Coverlet', *Quilt Studies*, 3, (2001), pp.11-32

²⁶ T. Fenwick-Smith et al 'The 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet', *Quilt Studies*, 5, (2003), pp.24-109

²⁷ B. Long, 'The Blossoming of Patchwork: A Study of Cotton and Linen Patchwork at the End of the Eighteenth and Beginning of the Nineteenth Century', *Quilt Studies*, 7, (2006), pp.25-54; B. Long, 'Uncovering Hidden Marks on the 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet', *Quilt Studies*, 9, (2008), pp.62-83; B. Long, 'Sibling, Cousin or Friend?: Considering the Relationship between Two Late Eighteenth-century Mosaic Patchwork Coverlets', *Quilt Studies*, 10, (2009), pp.89-112; C. Ducey, 'From the United Kingdom to the United States: The Evolution of Chintz Appliqué Quilts', *Quilt Studies*, 11, (2010), pp.35-64; J. Frisch, 'British Influences on the American Block-Style Quilt', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 15, (2014), pp.34-65

²⁸ S. Prichard, ed., *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*, (London: V&A Publishing, 2010)

highlights the need to mark not only the history of an object, but also the history in the object. It has particular relevance for this study of eighteenth-century patchwork, which will use both material and documentary evidence.

Material culture study is ‘clearly a different way of engaging the past than abstractly through the written word’ and allows an understanding of ‘the individuals who commissioned, made, used or enjoyed objects’.²⁹ In the 1970s and 1980s, the study of material culture became recognised as an academic subject that bridged the disciplines of history, anthropology, archaeology, folk life and art history and many of the early texts in this field emanated from North America.³⁰ The study in its broadest sense can be described as the identification and interpretation of man-made objects and in an early review of the development of the subject, Martin and Garrison (1997) wrote that ‘multidisciplinary perspectives are the field’s source of energy’.³¹

The approach evolved out of efforts in other fields to establish some order in the way that flora and fauna, geological eras, archaeological periods or even stars in the galaxy could be identified and then classified. Linnaeus’s work on plant taxonomy in the eighteenth century typified the principle of applying classification systems in order to facilitate scientific study. Early work in the material cultural field recognised that object-centred studies required similar efficient plans for the documentation and analysis of artefacts leading to a series of authors or ‘taxonomists’ developing models or ‘classification systems’.³² In the 1960s, Montgomery was the first to suggest the application of the approaches developed by art historians to the study of objects and proposed fourteen points to consider when looking at an artefact.³³ Criticism of his method was based on his need for intuitive decisions regarding many of the steps and that the

²⁹ J. D. Prown, ‘Style as Evidence’, *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 15, (1980), p.208

³⁰ These include T. J. Schlereth, ed., *Material Culture: A Research Guide*, (Kansas: University of Kansas, 1985); R. B. St. George, ed., *Material Life in America 1600-1860*, (Boston: Northeastern University, 1988); G. L. Pocius, ed., *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*, (St. Johns, Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991); A. S. Martin and J. S. Garrison, eds., *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*, (Delaware: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Inc., 1997); T. J. Schlereth, ed., *Material Culture Studies in America*, (New York: Altamira Press, 1999)

³¹ A. S. Martin and J. R. Garrison, ‘Shaping the Field: The Multidisciplinary Perspectives of Material Culture’, in Martin and Garrison, *American Material Culture*, p.1

³² Carson used these terms when reviewing the progress of material culture scholarship see C. Carson, ‘Material Culture History: The Scholarship Nobody Knows’, in Martin and Garrison, *American Material Culture*, (1997), p.408

³³ C. F. Montgomery, ‘The Connoisseurship of Artefacts’, in Schlereth, *Material Culture Studies in America*, (1999), pp.143-52

conclusions reached were often subjective relying upon many points of personal opinion which drew on a connoisseur's knowledge of an object group rather than a technical checklist.

McClung Fleming (1974) proposed a discipline of artefact study that started with the identification or classification of an object including its description, construction, design, history and provenance and moved on to evaluation of the artefact by comparing it with groups of objects in order to discover its significance and appreciate its aesthetic importance. He highlighted the value of quantitative and qualitative analysis using a body of related artefacts. By investigating the relationship of an artefact to aspects of its contemporary culture and using what McClung Fleming termed 'cultural analysis', the study of the object could then be advanced toward uncovering the history in the object.³⁴

Prown (1982) took more of an art historian's approach when he outlined three stages of description, deduction and speculation. In order to avoid the analyst's own cultural bias, he suggested that the stages were taken in sequence and kept as discrete as possible when moving from the extraction of physical evidence to demonstrating the emotional relationship between the object and the perceiver before finally developing theories and hypotheses which may need further investigation to confirm. Unlike Fleming, Prown regarded the use of historical documents and information about the article's provenance as additional external evidence and the consideration of the comparative relationship of an object to other examples of the same category was also not part of the three-stage process.³⁵

Later authors offered alternative models to Fleming and Prown's method by altering the emphasis or order of the major components of a comprehensive artefact study. A graduate history seminar held in 1983-84 took the two existing models to produce their own hybrid method. The so-called New Brunswick method aimed 'to encourage the researcher to examine the artefact more closely for observable data before relying upon documentary sources', but recognised the need to extract, at a later stage, comparative data by considering similar objects

³⁴ E. McClung Fleming, 'Artefact Study: A Proposed Model', *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 9, (1974), pp.153-73

³⁵ J. Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 17, (1982), pp.1-19

and make use of supplementary data such as documentary evidence as well.³⁶ They suggested that the value of an artefact was of significance, interpreting value as the importance of the object to the owner and to society in general as well as its original monetary value. Fleming's method was again the basis for a re-appraisal by Pearce in 1986 who proposed a complex model progressing from the physical properties of an object to its cultural significance.³⁷

Martin and Garrison's examination of the development of material history scholarship identified the three main streams of expertise that emanated from the disciplines of anthropology, social history and art history. In particular, they recognised that historians valued the use of objects as additional evidence to interpret the lives of the non-elite and non-literate and agreed that material culture is 'simply another vital source of historical knowledge, supplemental to words for those who have had little access to them'.³⁸ The historians' approach includes developing quantitative studies of objects in order to provide data for analysis and is reliant upon the survival of the required objects from the specific study period. Survival is an evident problem in the study of non-elite textiles from the past as suggested by Styles (2007) in his study of everyday fashion in eighteenth-century England, which has implications for this current study.³⁹

Historians have demonstrated the value of combining material and documentary evidence in order to acquire a better understanding of broad topics such as production, consumption and trade.⁴⁰ This was typified by Martin's 1993 review of historians' extensive use of material culture studies related to the topic of consumption, particularly in America, across three centuries.⁴¹ Schoeser and Boydell (2002) and Hayward and Kramer (2007) have both edited

³⁶ 'Towards a Material History Methodology', *Material Culture Review*, Vol. 22, (1985), p31-40 later published as R. S. Elliot, 'Towards a Material History Methodology', in S. M. Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.109-24

³⁷ S. M. Pearce, 'Thinking about things' in Pearce, *Interpreting Objects*, (1994), pp.125-32

³⁸ Martin. and Garrison, *American Material Culture*, p.12; L. Auslander, 'Beyond Words', *The American History Review*, Vol. 110, (2005), p.117

³⁹ J. Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-century England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007),

⁴⁰ K. Harvey, ed., *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2009)

⁴¹ A. S. Martin, 'Makers, Buyers and Users: Consumerism as a Material Culture Framework', *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 28, (1993), pp.141-57

texts that have drawn together the work being carried out in the study of textile history that uses object study to considering consumption, taste, fashion, decoration and culture.⁴²

An opposite approach is used by art historians who research the stylistic and technological changes to be found through the study of artefacts. While historians regard objects as additional documents, art historians use groups of artefacts to analyse form, function and style in order to demonstrate stylistic developments that relate directly to cultural changes. Their work is exemplified by Prown's analysis of pre- and post-revolutionary American furniture and other related objects when he highlighted that commonalities of style in a variety of objects from the same period is not a coincidence and such stylistic markers, even in a watered-down version, can be found in non-elite artefacts.⁴³

The historiography relating to material culture studies highlights the different approaches adopted by authors over the last forty years. The advantages of employing a strict method of analysing artefacts individually rather than collectively have been acknowledged, but such an approach was less likely to be effective in this study, which relies on a mix of detailed appraisal and remote recording of objects. There is a difference of opinion between writers concerning the advantages and disadvantages of employing documentary evidence alongside artefact analysis and recording form and design in order to mark stylistic changes over time. This thesis uses objects that very rarely have accompanying provenance details and documentary evidence from provenance could be regarded as supplementary to the object studies. However an analysis of collective stylistic changes plays a significant part in the study.

The Relationship between Patchwork and Key Themes in the Study of Eighteenth-Century Britain

How people made, acquired and used objects is an important aspect of the studies of production and consumption within the eighteenth century. McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb (1982) recognised that the eighteenth century was a time when the British were gradually able to find more comfort at home where they could indulge themselves by acquiring more than the basics

⁴² M. Schoeser, and C. Boydell, eds., *Disentangling Textiles: Techniques for the Study of Designed Objects*, (London: Middlesex University Press, 2002); M. Hayward and E. Kramer, eds., *Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the Link between Archival and Object Based Research*, (London: Archetype Press, 2007)

⁴³ Prown, 'Style as Evidence', (1980)

for living and by filling spare time with new leisure pursuits.⁴⁴ Crowley (2000) also marked the period when the idea of comfort changed from an intellectual ideal of moral support and encouragement to the enhancement of physical wellbeing through the provision of an improved environment and lifestyle. He proposed that there was a new emphasis on physical comfort which had an influence on spending and as such contributed to the growth in consumption.⁴⁵

McKendrick highlighted a growing taste for new commodities, together with an ever-expanding list of utensils that provided ways of appreciating them. The key was not just a desire to consume, but the ability to do so as housekeepers turned to domestic non-essentials to enhance their homes. Theirs was an early work that saw the advantages of quantitative studies of probate inventories in order to analyse ownership and spending patterns and also carry out inter-regional comparisons in order to show how consumption grew across the nation.

Weatherill (1988) made a significant contribution to the study of the material lives of the British in the period. She identified that the study of the acquisition and use of domestic items would contribute greatly to this debate and used data from inventories across the country to show that the growth in consumption in the century from 1660 to 1760 was patchy and varied across both the social classes and the regions. Using key domestic items that featured regularly in inventories, she tracked the growth in ownership of new products such as tea and coffee and decorative items such as window curtains, clocks and mirrors. By demonstrating that households of the 'commercial trades' such as merchants, shop owners and inn keepers were more likely to own new products or decorative items than those of professionals or the lesser gentry, she provided a contribution to the debate about emulation or imitating the higher social classes.⁴⁶

McKendrick had accepted the traditional eighteenth-century premise that emulation of the higher social classes was a valid reason for the increasing acquisitiveness of eighteenth-century households, particularly toward the end of the century. McKendrick in his chapter on the commercialization of fashion suggested that, before the eighteenth century 'most people had been virtually immune to the effect of fashion', but now fashion was being aimed at the growing

⁴⁴ N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England*, (London: Europa Publ., 1982)

⁴⁵ J. E. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America*, (Baltimore and England: John Hopkins University Press, 2000)

⁴⁶ L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988)

middling market.⁴⁷ By acknowledging that ‘fashion occasions the Experience of Cloaths before the Old ones are worn out’, he suggested that fashion was being followed and copied to some degree by people lower down the social scale.⁴⁸

Later writers including Weatherill and Vickery addressed this topic and, in her review of McKendrick’s and more recent writing, Vickery (1993) suggested that, in acquiring certain goods, each class may be seeking to distinguish itself from other classes and provide forms of an inward-looking social identity. In her study of the patterns of consumption and possessions of a Lancashire woman, she singled out changing fashions in dress as the one topic that suggested that women were driven by a desire to emulate. However her evidence also revealed that the drive to imitate the dress of the aristocracy and wealthy of London was moderated by a disapproval of excess and a scorn of sartorial extremes.⁴⁹ The controls over the desire to acquire material goods would include the need to show propriety and accordance with the expectations of the social circle in which a purchaser lived.

Weatherill’s work was followed by a number of further studies using inventories. In particular, Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann (2004) made a significant intervention by considering production alongside consumption and testing whether home production reduced or increased during the period up to 1750.⁵⁰ They saw the use of inventories as a way of recording ownership of new products as well as increased ownership of more traditional goods such as furniture and cooking utensils, but also focussed on the number and use of rooms in the home. London was regarded as the conduit for internal trade in goods and the focus for the development of consumerism in the period. By comparing records in the two distinctly different counties of Kent and Cornwall, Overton was able to suggest that there was a growth in consumption in metropolitan London and that growth spread out at varying rates across the country.

In the introduction to their edited publication concerning consumption across the Atlantic world, Brewer and Porter (1993) highlighted that the study of ‘the world of goods’ was a

⁴⁷ McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, (1982), pp.34-99

⁴⁸ N. Barton, *A Discourse of Trade*, (1690) cited in McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society*, (1982), p.15

⁴⁹ A. Vickery, ‘Women and the World of Goods: a Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions’, J. Brewer and R. Porter eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods*, (London: Routledge, 1993), pp.274-301

⁵⁰ M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean and A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004)

growing field and historians of the eighteenth century have been slow to embrace a recent move to consider the material lives of all levels of society. They suggested that the understanding of western societies will remain ‘impoverished’ until authors confront the fact that consumption of goods and services was a key influence over their growth and development.⁵¹

Brewer (1997) later marked the eighteenth century as the period when consumption of all ‘the pleasures of the imagination’ expanded alongside the increased acquisition of goods. He saw a growth of a British cultural heritage through the century with developments in art, music, theatre, poetry and literature. Opportunities to appreciate the fine arts grew not only within metropolitan London but, by the third quarter of the century, also in the expanding urban centres across Britain.⁵² Brewer also questioned whether imitation and emulation of social betters were the reasons for many people participating in and appreciating the fine arts. He felt that the spur was the desire for self improvement and that many regarded taste, culture and knowledge as forming a man better than rank, wealth or titles. ‘These tradesmen and merchants desired the cultural authority – the status – of gentlemen, but they did not wish to emulate them; rather they wanted to change the criteria of gentility itself’.⁵³

A notable feature of the influential texts such as McKendrick (1982), Weatherill (1988) and Overton (2004), which considered consumption and production patterns in eighteenth-century Britain, is that they draw on probate records surviving from the first half of the century. As a result, they were unable to engage fully with the period of industrial change of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries often defined as the ‘classic’ Industrial Revolution. An increasing focus on cotton imports together with technological changes in textile production observed during this period had a profound influence on consumer preferences. Inevitably, texts that consider the changing taste for textiles and the increasing production of domestic furnishings are of particular relevance to this study.

Although design historians had previously noted the impact that Asian textiles had on the styles of furnishing and dress of the period, Lemire (1991) was instrumental in encouraging an on-going re-examination of the relationship between British consumers and Indian cotton

⁵¹ J. Brewer and R. Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

⁵² J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, (London: HarperCollins, 1997)

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp.510-11

products. By considering the importation, widespread marketing, growing acquisition, home production, and increased usage within the home of cotton cloth, she initiated the re-appraisal of the position of cotton as ‘fashion’s favourite’ in the century.⁵⁴ Since her earlier work, authors have continued to analyse the household consumption of cloth and the impact of cotton on home textile production in an attempt to establish the tipping point when cotton took over from wool, linen and silk as the dominant cloth on the British market.⁵⁵

When considering product innovation in London, Styles (2000) suggested that new products such as Indian printed and painted calicoes were only successfully introduced to the British market after the consumers’ pre-existing experience, knowledge and prejudices were overcome. Product innovation was only achieved through the formation of new tastes and, in the case of calicoes, by a significant adaptation and redefinition of the product.⁵⁶ Riello (2013) provided a recent review of current thinking regarding the impact of cotton on European textile consumption and proposed that the taste for cotton developed not as a ‘craze’, but by ‘a slow process of familiarisation with a new fabric and a new medium of design and fashion’ despite institutional controls. He stressed the importance of product substitution, whereby the British limitations on use of Indian cotton imposed by the Calico Acts of 1702 and 1720 actively encouraged the growth of a home-based printing industry using linen and cotton mix cloths and stimulated the continuing interest in printed cloths.⁵⁷

Recent writing on shops and shopping has re-evaluated the status of shops in the eighteenth century and accepted that the retail environment was more sophisticated than previous authors had envisaged, with shops taking over from street markets and itinerant tradesmen as the

⁵⁴ B. Lemire, *Fashion’s Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Lemire later provided a comprehensive collection of original print sources focussed on cotton together with a commentary in B. Lemire, ed., *The British Cotton Trade, 1660-1815*, 4 vols., (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010)

⁵⁵ See for example J. Styles, ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and Their Furnishing in Eighteenth-Century London’ in J. Styles and A. Vickery, eds., *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.61-80; Styles, *The Dress of the People*, Chapter 7, (2007), pp.110-32; J. Styles, ‘What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution?’, in G. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, eds., *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles 1200-1850*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.307-26

⁵⁶ J. Styles, ‘Product Innovation in Early Modern London’, *Past and Present*, 168 (1), (2000), pp.124-69

⁵⁷ G. Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), in particular Chapter 6, pp.110-35

main source of goods for sale.⁵⁸ This recent literature considered shop design, how the commodities were sold, the products that were stocked, and the methods that were used to promote the goods for sale. In particular, shopkeepers in both London and the provinces played an active part in the promotion of up-to-date dress and new textiles. Women's shopping strategies that demonstrate the female differences in acquiring and consuming goods are also of significance for the understanding of the sourcing of fabric for use in decorative needlework. Vickery (1993, 1998), suggested that there was a difference in the husband and wife's buying patterns when acquiring items for the household and textiles were considered to be part of the woman's world. Walsh (2006), when considering shopping as a social interaction felt that 'a consumer's social network was the most significant influence on her shopping behaviour' and that decisions about purchases were governed to a great extent by the attitude and taste of her social and cultural circle.⁵⁹

Domestic needlework must be considered within the context of life in the eighteenth-century home. The majority of the early literature focuses on elite houses and draws upon bills and receipts, inventories, household accounts and reminiscences by authors from the higher social class.⁶⁰ More recent work provides a view of middling lifestyles with further detail about household chores, provisioning, making and repairing as well as leisure pursuits.⁶¹

The study of decorative needlework impinges on domestic life, women's position in the home and the training of girls either 'at mother's knee' or in formal education. In her critical review of two separate historiographies, Vickery (1993) considered the debates that relate to the position, status and identity of women's lives in the period ranging from the seventeenth to the

⁵⁸ H-C. Mui and L. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London: Routledge, 1989); C. Walsh, 'Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-century London', *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 8 No. 3, (1995), pp.157-76; N. Cox, *The Complete Tradesman: A Study in Retailing 1550-1820*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000)

⁵⁹ A. Buck, A. 'Buying Clothes in Bedfordshire: Customers and Tradesmen, 1700-1800', *Textile History*, 22, (1991), pp.211-37; A. Vickery, 'Women and the World of Goods: a Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions, 1751-81' in Brewer and Porter, *Consumption*, (1993), pp.274-301 ; A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); H. Berry, 'Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England', *The Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (2002), Sixth Series, Vol. XII, pp.375-94; C. Walsh, 'Shops, Shopping and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth-century England', in Styles and Vickery, *Gender, Taste and Material Culture*, pp.151-77; A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors At Home in Georgian England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp.106-128

⁶⁰ M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978)

⁶¹ M. Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors 1750-1850*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009)

nineteenth centuries. She examined the discussions surrounding the spheres of public power and private domesticity and how they relate to late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century middle class women and considered the perceived social and economic marginalisation of upper middling and gentry women in the early modern period. She demonstrated that more recent research has not necessarily confirmed the social isolation of women within the home and implied that things were ever thus, so that the suggested mechanisms which brought about this posited isolation and marginalisation were not necessarily unique to the period.⁶²

Parker (1984) used the history of embroidery to chart the progress of women's history and proposed that eighteenth-century women were held back by the need to achieve high standards in feminine arts and by the predominance of un-ambitious school curricula.⁶³ Earlier writers on eighteenth-century education had tracked the depressing theme of education for women at home or in day and boarding school with a curriculum generally restricted to little more than reading and writing and accomplishments such as needlework, music, drawing and French.⁶⁴ Hilton and Shefrin (2009) suggest that much of the modern attitude toward eighteenth-century education has been shaped by largely-unchallenged, nineteenth-century perceptions, which focus on predominantly male, educational institutions. They see that more recent work offers the opportunity to re-unite the history of education with wider themes that are predominant in eighteenth-century studies.⁶⁵ Such writing addresses the topic of an expanding curriculum for boys and girls towards the end of the century. It considers contemporary discussions concerning the merits of a well-educated daughter or wife as well as focussing on the public/private debate regarding the benefits of schooling in public outside the home or in private within the domestic

⁶² A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (1993), pp.383-414; historiography includes A. Buck, 'Mantuumakers and Milliners: Women Making and Selling Clothes in Eighteenth-century Bedfordshire', *Bedfordshire Historical Miscellany: Essays in Honour of Patricia Bell*, (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society), Vol. 72, (1993), pp.142-55; H. Barker, 'Women, Work and the Industrial Revolution: Female Involvement in the English Printing Trades c.1700-1840', in H. Barker and E. Chalus, eds., *Gender in Eighteenth century England*, (London: Longman, 1997), pp.81-100; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, (1998); S.C. Djabri, *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst 1759-1762, Life and Love in Eighteenth-century Horsham*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2003); N. Phillips, *Women in Business*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2007); Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009)

⁶³ Parker, *Subversive Stitch*, (1984), pp.82-146

⁶⁴ N. Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1951); J. Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girl's Education in English History*, (London: Methuen, 1965); R. O'Day, *Education and Society 1500-1800*, (London: Longman, 1982), pp.179-95; M. Bryant, *The London Experience of Secondary Education*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1986)

⁶⁵ M. Hilton and J. Shefrin, eds., *Educating the Child in the Enlightenment: Beliefs, Cultures, Practices* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), Introduction, pp.1-20

environment.⁶⁶ When examining children's education in Enlightenment Britain, writers have also considered the role of women teachers and the importance of domestic education for girls including the significance of the role of social conversation.⁶⁷

The pressure to acquire all the appropriate accomplishments was also a theme pursued by Cohen (1996), Vickery (1998, 2009) and Bermingham (2000).⁶⁸ Then as now, there was discussion regarding the definition of 'accomplishment' and whether the subjects generally taught were relevant to a girl's future domestic life. Vickery has adopted a more positive view on the decorative products of girls' training, calling for a re-appraisal of Georgian needlework and crafts.

The history of patchwork in the long eighteenth century can be connected to some of the wider themes that dominate contemporary eighteenth-century studies. The practice of one specific domestic needlework technique relates to the topics of production, consumption, shopping, domestic life, education and fashion and engages with the debates addressing these themes. The last three decades has seen a maturing of the studies relating to the consumer culture of the period. Since McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb (1983) much of the current debate is focussed on the rate of spread of consumerism across the country. However, McKendrick's views on emulation as a conduit for the dissemination of fashion have been countered by more nuanced work, which identified the strong influence of social groupings and a focus on class identity. The study of patchwork in the period, which follows two distinct narrative strands, provides further evidence for the latter view. Cowley was instrumental in identifying the period when desire for physical comfort influenced a growth in consumption, but his suggestion that

⁶⁶ M. Cohen, 'Gender and the Private/Public Debate on Education in the Long Eighteenth Century' in R. Aldrich, ed., *Public or Private Education?: Lessons from History*, (London: Routledge Falmer, 2000), pp.2-24; M. Cohen, 'To think, to compare, to combine, to methodise': Girl's Education in Enlightenment Britain', in S. Knott and B. Taylor, eds., *Women, Gender and Enlightenment*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp.224-42; M. Cohen, 'A Little Learning? The Curriculum and Construction of Gender Difference in the Long Eighteenth Century' *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 29, (2006), pp. 321-35; S. Woodley, "'Oh Miserable and Most Ruinous Measure": The Debate between Private and Public Education in Britain, 1760-1800', in Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child*, (2009), pp.21-39

⁶⁷M. Cohen, 'Familiar Conversation: The Role of the 'Familiar Formal' in Education in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth century', in Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child*, (2009), pp.99-116; M. C. Martin, 'Marketing Religious Identity: Female Education, Methodist Culture and Eighteenth-century Childhood' in Hilton and Shefrin, *Educating the Child*, (2009), pp.57-76

⁶⁸ M. Cohen, *Fashioning Masculinity: National Identity and Language in the Eighteenth Century*, (London Routledge, 1996), Chapter 5, pp.64-78; Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, (1998); A. Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000); Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009)

fashion had a stronger influence over purchasing strategies has been overtaken by work examining the growth of commodities that furnish private areas of the house. The evidence for a blossoming of patchwork in the bedroom should be considered in light of this work.

Patchwork is made from fabric, one of the significant transforming commodities of the period. Strategies adopted for the sourcing of the materials for patchwork relate directly to the current thinking about shops and shopping and reflect the changing tastes for cloth in the period. The ongoing debate concerning the dominance of cotton in all markets toward the end of the eighteenth century has relevance when considering the materials to be found in patchwork.

Women's domestic lives in the period have been the source of some negative writing, which examines their perceived second-class position trapped in the home and restricted by an un-ambitious education curriculum. This study of patchwork relates to more recent work which portrays some women as capable mistresses of their own sphere, able to move between public and private spaces and make decisions on how they spent their leisure time. It engages with the debate that the later eighteenth century saw a widening of the school curriculum for girls and enhanced opportunities for self-education at home.

Eighteenth Century Styles and Design Influences

The long eighteenth century was a period which saw shifts in decorative styles that were influenced by the larger, European-wide changes in architectural design principles as well as the expanded knowledge of the world through trade with Asia and of the past through the work of antiquarians.⁶⁹ Much of the current thinking on this topic was shaped by Allen's work in the 1930s, which appraised the main styles of the period as seen in architecture, interior decoration and gardens. He used contemporary writing to show that taste was influenced, to a great extent, by the authors' reaction in favour of, or against, a predominant emphasis on the classical past.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ An overview of design developments within the eighteenth century can be found in M. Snodin and J. Styles, *Design and the Decorative Arts Georgian Britain 1714-1837*, (London: V&A Publications, 2004)

⁷⁰ B. S. Allen, *Tides in English Taste (1619-1800) A Background for the Study of Literature*, Vols. I and II, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937)

More recent work has continued to show the relationship of the influential styles to the decorative arts, but most have studied the high style that is seen in houses of the wealthy elite.⁷¹ They have drawn on original architectural designs and garden plans of influential professionals together with evidence from remnants of original décor in house interiors, surviving artefacts, art and literature to make their case and, with the exception of contemporary prints, offer little to show Prown's 'watered-down versions of stylistic markers'. By concentrating on the houses and furnishings of the wealthy, they are unable to demonstrate how people of lower rank engaged with new and fashionable styles.

However Allen (1937) and Denvir (1983, 1984) showed that there was a promulgation of the favoured high styles through the establishment of organisations such as the Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce, the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Academy of Arts. This was assisted through the growing influence of books, newspapers and magazines and the use of a variety of architectural forms at public venues such as Ranelagh and Vauxhall. Styles (1994) emphasised the development of the occupations of designer and pattern drawer during the century led by the realisation that British manufacturers needed to compete with their opposite numbers on the continent for a share of the quality, elite market.⁷² In order to maintain high levels of design knowledge, lessons in drawing and training for draftsmen were promoted heavily and publication of designs for specific trades such as *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director* (1754) became readily available.⁷³ Through such means, an enhanced awareness of and desire for fashionable styles developed further across the population and high style could become modified or watered-down to suit the circumstances or the pocket.

With the enhanced awareness came a demand for novel and fashionable goods in the new style. Manufacturers of non-luxury goods were not necessarily producing one-off, bespoke designs, but were making objects in the same form and detail based on a fixed specification and

⁷¹ J. Fowler and J. Cornforth, *English Decoration in the 18th Century*, (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974); P. Thornton, *Seventeenth Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978); B. Denvir, *The Eighteenth Century: Art, Design and Society 1689-1789*, (London: Longman, 1983); B. Denvir, *The Early Nineteenth Century: Art, Design and Society 1789-1852*, (London: Longman, 1984); C. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth-Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1993)

⁷² J. Styles, 'Manufacturing, Consumption and Design in Eighteenth-century England', in Brewer and Porter, eds., *Consumption*, (1993), pp.527-54

⁷³ T. Chippendale, *The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director; Being a Large Collection of the Most Elegant and Useful Designs of Household Furniture in the Gothic, Chinese and Modern Taste*, (London, 1754)

using a verbal or visual template or design; in this context a design is a working plan to be used for manufacture of an object. Forty (1986) favoured the use of ‘design’ in this way rather than ‘design’ defining the look or aesthetic of an object. His approach focussed on the second half of the eighteenth century where he saw the growth in a variety of products as the result of subterfuge where manufacturers made new goods unthreatening. Using the example of Wedgwood’s manufacturing practices, he suggested that they were not taste makers, but taste followers and they chose popular styles for the design of objects as a way of making them acceptable.⁷⁴ Styles (1993) used evidence from earlier in the century as well as from the preceding century to focus upon acquiring an understanding of increased rates of both production and consumption in order to develop an appreciation of design. He saw the period as one where manufacture was set up to be adaptable to changes in fashion as well as demand and that large manufacturers or merchants played the role of decision makers in order to ensure that the ‘right’ design sold the goods.⁷⁵ Craske (1999) suggested that demand from the wider public for objects in novel styles could only be satisfied by manufacturers who had the skill to create, source or commission new working designs and the entrepreneurial vision to co-ordinate the sourcing of raw materials, the employment of a work force or sub-contractor and the supply of an ever-changing stock of goods to the retail market.⁷⁶

The oft-quoted example of merchants shaping what was produced for the British market is the case of the painted and printed cotton that was imported from India during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷⁷ Irwin (1955) used records of instructions to Indian printworkers to show that the ‘classic’ Tree of Life-style, which was seen in palampores produced for the British market, was imposed on the producers by the East India Company directors. He found that the flowing, many-branched style of flowering tree, or ‘Tree of Life’, dictated by the merchants was not a feature of Indian art, but was a favoured English design that can be seen in embroideries

⁷⁴ A. Forty, *Objects of Desire Design and Society since 1750*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986)

⁷⁵ Styles, ‘Manufacturing, Consumption and Design’, in Brewer and Porter, *Consumption*, (1993), pp.527-54

⁷⁶ M. Craske, ‘Plan and Control: Design and the Competitive Spirit in Early and Mid-Eighteenth-Century England’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1999), pp.187-216

⁷⁷ For a demonstration of the Indian fabric printmakers’ adaptability in printing for the Indian, Asiatic, Persian and European markets see J. Jacqué and B. Nicolas, *Féerie indienne Des Rivage de l’Inde au Royaume de France*, (Paris: Somogy editions d’art, Musée de l’Impression sur étoffes and Musée de la Compagnie des Indes, 2009)

from the sixteenth and seventeenth century and which was more likely to be inspired by Chinese and Japanese art.⁷⁸

Discussions concerning the shifting fashions for a variety of decorative styles in the period are signs of an ongoing contemporary discourse regarding taste and sensibility. In considering the nature of taste, Jones (1998) addressed the ‘mobile’ concept of beauty suggesting that definitions of beauty ‘were manipulated ... to establish not only the refinement of the speaker but also their sense of their social and cultural distinction’.⁷⁹ He suggests that, with the expansion of the group of those who were able to acquire more as well as involve themselves in cultural activities due to enhanced social position and pecuniary wealth, there was an increasing demand for guidance on what defined good and appropriate taste and who possessed it. Writers had debated whether taste was an innate sense apportioned to a few arbiters, whether connoisseurship could be acquired with study and whether beauty could be judged from sight or by sense and feelings. He proposed that the ideal of women as arbiters of taste was given consideration in the second half of the century, as well as whether women’s beauty should be aligned alongside virtue.

A number of influential authors continued this debate throughout the century, but Jones’s account reveals that the discussion was aimed at educated, mainly male, members of the elite and upper middle class. Quite how a woman of lower rank would react to what was currently deemed tasteful or even beautiful cannot be discerned easily and this has implications when considering design influences in domestic decorative needlework. However, women of all classes would have absorbed current trends in fashion by socialising, mixing or working with the general public and fashion, whether watered down or recently out of mode through distance from London, would have made its presence felt.

In this study, design is taken as defining the look of an object rather than Forty’s working plan for the production of artefacts. The design of patchwork objects was examined in relation to the dominant styles of the period in the hope of locating examples of Prown’s diluted ‘stylistic markers’, but it is clear that the majority of patchwork was generally unaffected by such external

⁷⁸ J. Irwin, ‘Origins of the ‘Oriental Style’ in English Decorative Art’, *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 97, No. 625 (1955), pp.106-14

⁷⁹R. W. Jones, *Gender and the Formation of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Britain The Analysis of Beauty*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

influences. However the ‘chinoiserie’ aesthetic seen in Asian printed cloth of the period had a direct influence on some appliqué from the end of the century.

Research Methodologies

This research covers a period of textile history where the material evidence is comparatively sparse, whereas the evidence to be found in documentary sources is far richer. The approach therefore is to combine quantitative and qualitative studies of surviving patchwork objects with the evidence found in a variety of primary documentary sources, while recognising that any material evidence found will be biased toward the higher ranks of society.

Textiles survive because they have significance for the generations of owners who keep them safe. They belonged to households whose social circumstances meant that there was no need to use them to destruction and where the owners could afford to provide new textiles to replace old. As discussed further at Chapter 1, patchwork survives through a combination of luck and good fortune and is far more likely to be found in the attic or store cupboard of a well-established, stable family than to have been hidden away in the corner of a run-down lodging house or a labourer’s cottage.

Object-based study is a crucial component of this research in providing a collective evaluation of over two hundred and twenty patchwork artefacts in private and public collections in Britain and the United States of America. The latter country provided a limited number of objects that were mostly in collections on the eastern seaboard, but objects with a known American provenance were not included in the survey. However the study was constrained by the variable quality of the data available since many examples have been examined through the medium of institutional accession records and, in some cases such as auction catalogues, through images only.

This is not be the first time that patchwork practice has been studied through the documentation of objects’ physical properties, but previous projects have involved close examination of a large number of artefacts, which were mostly from the nineteenth and twentieth century. Such initiatives involved the physical appraisal of thousands of objects where the smallest details concerning form, design, layout, technique and fabric was recorded. Each project produced results which were set out in databases with a large number of fields and have often

proved to be too unwieldy to process significant data in any effective way. Importantly, the databases were not set up to be compatible with other projects.⁸⁰

Many of the objects in this research were in accessible institutional or private collections allowing detailed study. However, others were located at a distance and information regarding their physical form was limited by the variable quality and quantity of available accession records. With these examples it soon became apparent that, while the dimensions and general fabric content of the patchwork were usually recorded, important detail regarding sewing technique, the presence of templates and dating of the object using the fabrics present, was frequently unavailable. Significantly some objects do not have adequate images available; a sad indication of lack of resources in some British institutions. The inadequacies of the available information in some cases prompted the decision to limit the recorded fields in the research database developed for this thesis (see Appendices 2 and 3) and to concentrate mainly on physical properties that could be appraised visually across all the examples in the database. It was then possible to examine sufficient objects in detail in order to allow additional relevant conclusions regarding sewing techniques and template use together with detailed fabric analysis.

A material record that is generally limited to objects stitched by middling and gentry needlewomen creates difficulties when attempting to apply the norms of form, fabric, techniques and design to documentary records that relate to plebeian practice. In the absence of objects made by women in reduced social circumstances, the suggestion for their likely typical form has to be based on consideration of the availability of materials, the level of skill expected and the time available for work. These conclusions were also compared with patchwork objects, which have been made by women in similar conditions of financial hardship and social deprivation at other historic periods.

⁸⁰ Humphrey examined state quilt documentation in the USA and recorded thirty five projects, which were initiated between 1980 and 1989; C. Humphrey, *Quilt Documentation Projects 1980-1989: Exploring the Roots of a National Phenomenon*, MA thesis, (2010), University of Nebraska-Lincoln available at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsdiss/84>, accessed: 31 May 2011; since 2003 many of the databases from American state projects have been brought together in The Quilt Index, available at <http://www.quiltindex.org/>; the British Quilt Heritage Project ran from 1990 to 1993, see J. Rae, et al., *Quilt Treasures: The Quilters' Guild Heritage Search*, (1995)

The documentary sources used for this research are varied. The two main sources provided an opportunity to carry out quantitative analyses of records that cover the complete study period of 1680 to 1820.

The printed records of trials held at the Old Bailey court are a rich source for the study of objects stolen from owners in London and Middlesex and have been examined in documentary and later digital form by historians from George (1925) onwards.⁸¹ The trial transcripts in the printed Old Bailey Sessions Papers contributed a small list of patchwork objects, together with details of their owners and, occasionally, their makers. Significantly, detail from more than thirteen hundred trials allowed a detailed quantitative examination of the likely physical form of bedcovers used in London.

Probate records have played an important part in studies of the material lives of British households in the eighteenth century. Despite their limitations as legal documents in the ecclesiastical courts, drawn up to determine the value of a person's wealth and possessions at their death, historians have drawn on the records in order to build a picture of the consumption patterns in the century. However they have emphasised the problems with using records that were created for one separate specific purpose in order to reveal how an eighteenth-century householder lived, farmed, worked, traded or furnished his home.⁸² The inventories were often incomplete lists of a deceased's possessions and their completeness and accuracy was dependent upon the appraisers' interpretation of their role as well as their thoroughness and judgement regarding the second-hand market value of items. The objects recorded are rarely accompanied by descriptive terms and the quality and condition of the items listed usually can only be demonstrated by a lower or higher valuation.

Most of the collections of probate records, which feature in the influential texts on consumption practices, survive only from the first half of the eighteenth century.

⁸¹ *Proceedings of the Old Bailey 1674-1913*, available from: www.oldbaileyonline.org; notably cited by M. D. George, *London Life in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Harper Row, 1925); also by Lemire, *Fashions Favourite*, (1991); Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey', (2006)

⁸² The literature includes M. Spufford, 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', in J. Chartres and D. Hey, eds., *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.139-74; T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose, eds., *When Death Do Us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000); L. C. Orlin, 'The Fiction of the Early Modern English Probate Inventory', in H. S. Turner, ed., *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp.51-83

Huntingdonshire is unusual among English counties in the survival of numerous detailed probate inventories after 1750 into the nineteenth century. The records provided more than three hundred and seventy inventories to be used as a provincial comparison with the evidence derived from the records of the Old Bailey.⁸³

Many literate women of the period made their mark on history by leaving behind diaries, correspondence and reminiscences of their life. From the depressed account of an ignored wife in 1700 to the mid-nineteenth century memories of a woman coming to the end of her life, the personal accounts provide an insight into their lives and domestic routines.⁸⁴ However they were frequently censored by their writers, or selectively pruned by later editors. In the eyes of the authors or the editors, accounts of the daily routine of plain and decorative sewing did not necessarily contribute to the enhanced image of the writer and would not have provided sensational additions to the text. However, more than twenty diaries, letters and memoirs were used to provide a view into the sewing life of middling and genteel women and illustrate the social context in which patchwork was made.

The century is notable for a rapid growth in print culture. Relaxation of controls over printing at the end of the seventeenth century encouraged the emergence of newspapers in London and in urban centres across the country. The national newspaper archives allowed access to a large number of metropolitan and local papers where news items, trial reports and commercial advertisements offer further information concerning the owners and makers of patchwork.⁸⁵

During the course of this research, it became clear that patchwork played an important part in the language of the period, featuring literally and figuratively in writing of all kinds. The body of work produced by eighteenth-century lexicographers offered a variety of definitions of patchwork, as well as a number of explanations of the meaning of the words that were connected

⁸³ AH15-21, Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon 1585-1858, Huntingdon Archives and Local Studies, Huntingdon, The records are available on microfilm and are catalogued alphabetically and then in date order

⁸⁴ For example: Dame Sarah Cowper of Hertford diaries, Vol. 1, 1700-02, D/EP/F29, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies; Mrs C. H. Beale, ed., *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman of the Last Century Letters of Catherine Hutton*, (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1891)

⁸⁵ The British Newspaper Archive available from: www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

to the noun.⁸⁶ It was necessary to relate these definitions to the literal understanding of patchwork as set out in the documentary sources in order to appreciate how patchwork was understood by all levels of society. This allowed the tracking of its development through the century from a fashionable pastime to the embodiment of domestic economy and efficiency, observed in fiction during the second half of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries.

In the eighteenth century, moreover, patchwork moved from the world of domestic needlework into the public sphere, becoming frequently employed in the figurative language of the day. Literary scholars' discussions of figurative language have been shaped by the philosophical thinking of the time especially the contemporary response to Hobbs's (1651) and Locke's (1690) strong antipathy toward the general use of ornamental language.⁸⁷ Yet, in practice, figurative language was a key technique that writers, critics and orators of the period employed widely in order to convey their ideas and opinions. A qualitative study of all kinds of publications from the period revealed the extensive non-literal use of the word patchwork, in both positive and negative ways.

This thesis highlights the benefits of quantitative and qualitative study of the material and documentary evidence. The advantages of this combined approach emphasises the importance of employing a variety of analytical techniques in material cultural studies.

Patchwork Uncovered 1680-1820

In Chapter 1, the evidence from a new database of over two hundred and twenty patchwork objects, recorded in private and public collections in Britain and the United States of America (see Appendices 2 and 3), is considered. The statistics were extracted regarding object type, fabric, design layout, patchwork shapes, and sewing techniques. Given the disproportionate survival of objects made by needlewomen from the higher levels of society, the conclusions regarding the physical form of patchwork made in plebeian households were achieved by

⁸⁶ The most comprehensive and reliable dictionary is S. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are Deduced from their Originals*, (London, 1755)

⁸⁷ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme and Power of Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, Part 1, chapter IV, (1651); J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, Chapter 10, (1690); the historiography that considers these beliefs includes I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); M. Cohen, *Sensible Words Linguistic Practice in England 1640-1785*, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977); M. Johnson, ed., *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981)

speculating on the likely conditions under which they were made and making comparisons with patchwork made in similar conditions elsewhere in other periods.

A large majority of patchwork objects, recorded in the database, were bed furnishings, highlighting the need to provide an overview of bed and bedcover use in the period. In Chapter 2, bedcover nomenclature is examined by drawing on eighteenth-century lexicography and applying the findings to printed records of criminal trials heard at the Old Bailey court in London. Quantitative analyses of the type, number, value and fibre content of bedcovers stolen or used in evidence in Old Bailey trials provide an opportunity to compare contemporary definitions with the practical use of the terminology revealing an apparent mobility in meaning of some of the terms. A quantitative analysis of probate records listing named bedcovers from the archdiocese of Huntingdonshire provides a rural counterpoint to the results found from London and Middlesex and contributes further information concerning beds and bedcover use in the eighteenth century.

The majority of the existing patchwork objects survived through three hundred years to the present with little evidence about their makers or information concerning their later ownership. The owners and makers of patchwork throughout the century are considered in Chapter 3 by drawing on information extracted mainly from details of Old Bailey trials, newspaper entries, inventories, diaries and reminiscences as well as the limited data on provenance available for some patchwork objects. The place of patchwork in the plebeian world is examined and considered alongside the decorative patchwork stitched by women of higher social status in order to understand the different narrative strands that relate to the making of patchwork at the time. The chapter establishes that the large majority of patchwork was made at home. Few references to women earning a living from patchwork have been found.

Patchwork as part of domestic needlework is the theme of Chapter 4. Drawing on women's writing across the century and, in particular, the journal of Anna Margareta Larpent (1758-1832), aspects of domestic life including household duties, needlework, learning to sew, girls' education, fashion and the print culture are examined in relation to patchwork practice at the time. Such writing provides insights into the domestic life of women in better social circumstances, but additional sources including Old Bailey court cases, newspapers, reports from charitable institutions and educational manuals supply further details covering women's lives

across the social scale. The question of the level of sewing skills in the century is addressed and consideration given to whether the demand for hand spun linen and woollen thread had an impact on the teaching of sewing to plebeian women in rural and textile manufacturing areas before the introduction of factory spinning later in the century.

The practical side of the making of patchwork including the sourcing of fabrics and paper and the creation of patchwork designs and patterns is addressed in Chapter 5. Evidence found in some patchwork artefacts is considered alongside contemporary accounts describing how fabrics from garments and household furnishings were recycled to be used in the making of patchwork, together with purchased second-hand, discounted or full-price silks and cottons. The mosaic patchwork technique required paper to be cut up for patchwork templates and the significance of some needlewomen being able to ‘waste’ paper for their patchwork projects is emphasised.

While women relied upon commercial patterns for much of their embroidery, it is suggested that the designs for patchwork were created at home and were un-influenced by the major international design styles of the period. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century is identified as the period when new geometric patchwork shapes, in particular the hexagon, were introduced. It is argued that changes in educational practices may have contributed to their development. The chapter also consider the status of a technique described in contemporary accounts as cloth work promoted by needlework emporia that provided tuition and patterns. It discusses whether cloth work was the first reference to what would be described by modern authors as appliqué.

Patchwork in eighteenth-century language is the topic of Chapter 6. The 1755 dictionary compiled by Dr Johnson is regarded as the most comprehensive and reliable source of words in use at the time, but the body of work produced by the lexicographers of the period is used to provide definitions for patchwork and the related terms of pane, piece and patch, and they are considered in relation to the literal understanding of the term patchwork. They help track the contexts of its usage during the century from its highlighting as a fashionable activity in the early part of the century, to the later employment of the term to symbolise an idealised vision of domestic efficiency and economy as seen in fiction typifying the genres of the rural idyll and the morality tale.

The use of patchwork in figurative language is a key feature of the period. Patchwork was used as positive and negative similes and metaphors in literature, drama, critical review, political debate and theoretical discourse, from 1697, if not earlier, prompting an examination of the apparent mobility of the term. The possible catalysts for these different usages is proposed and a connection made to two separate narrative strands relating to patchwork; that made by middling and genteel ladies and that stitched by plebeian needlewomen.

It is argued that the employment of the term patchwork in a complimentary manner is connected to the fashionable status of the work for most of the period and its association with the biblical character Joseph and his coat of many colours. Its usage as a negative metaphor is related to two separate tropes. First, patchwork was linked with the motley costumes of the buffoonish British Merry Andrew and the Harlequin clown from *Commedia dell'arte* theatre, allowing it to be applied effectively in satire and criticism. Second, the word patch was associated with the definitions of bungle, botch, cobble and spoil in the lexicography of the day. It is suggested that the meaning of poorly-made or repaired objects was extended to patchwork so that it came to be used in a negative manner.

The conclusion not only draws together all the findings from the earlier chapters, but also highlights the possible direction for the future study of patchwork in the long eighteenth century. It argues that patchwork was embedded in the material and literary lives of the British. Noted for its longevity, surviving as a widespread practice for over one hundred and forty years across the long eighteenth century, it was a democratic needlework that was practiced by women at all levels of society. A widespread understanding of the term and familiarity with the practice enabled it to be employed successfully in the literal and figurative language of the period so that it moved from the small world of domestic needlework into the public spheres of politics, drama, literature and critical debate. Yet oddly, many modern authors associate historical patchwork predominantly with nineteenth- and twentieth-century North America. This thesis demonstrates that further research is now required to assess how British patchwork practice influenced needlewomen across the English-speaking world, in particular the new United States of America, during the following century.

Chapter 1 The Material Evidence in Patchwork Objects

In their study of woven textiles in Canada, Hood and Ruddel confirm the hopes of all who examine historical objects by saying ‘Artifacts test the knowledge gleaned from more traditional sources and are invaluable in the way they illustrate the reality of daily life.’¹ However by accepting that fabrics are easily worn to destruction, textile historians understand that their research is shaped by how and why objects survive. For textiles to survive for over two hundred years suggests some luck and good fortune and this implies that the survivors may not give a complete picture of use across all levels of society.

This chapter considers the evidence to be found in eighteenth-century patchwork objects while recognising that the evidence may be more of a reflection of needlework practice at the higher levels of society than indicative of what women of lower ranks made. Dawson used an analysis of samplers made in a convent between 1780 and 1900 in Canada to demonstrate that the range of stitching skill acquired by young needlewomen in the past were not necessarily of the high quality that would be predicted from traditional studies of elite needlework. She emphasised the dangers of only studying the best-quality examples of stitching to be found in museum collections.² That is clearly acknowledged in this study. There were very rare opportunities to be acquainted with objects that could have been made by women lower down the social scale and, inevitably, the form of plebeian patchwork is subject to much speculation.

This study of patchwork objects engages with the historiography of needlework practice and textile consumption in the period. It is another addition to a growing body of work that has employed material evidence alongside documentary sources to uncover more about eighteenth-century attitudes towards domestic needlework, household furnishings and fashion.³

¹ A. D. Hood and D. T. Ruddel, ‘Artifacts and Documents in the History of Quebec Textiles’, ed G. L. Pocius, *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*, (St John’s, Canada: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), pp.55-91

² J. A. T. Dawson, ‘Undated, Unattributed and Unfinished: Forgotten Samplers and their Re-evaluation through Archival Research’, M. Hayward and E. Kramer, ed., *Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the Links between Archival and Object-based Research*, (London: Archetype Press, 2007), pp.82-9

³ These include: L. Baumgarten, *What Clothes Reveal: The Language of Clothing in Colonial and Federal America*, (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation in association with Yale University Press, 2002); B. Burman and S. Denbo, *Pockets of History The Secret Life of an Everyday Object*, (Southampton: University of Southampton, 2006); C. Humphrey, *Quaker School Girls Samplers from Ackworth*, (Needleprint & Ackworth School Estates Ltd, 2006); J. Styles, *The Dress of the People: Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-century England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007); M. Laird and A. Weisberg-Roberts, eds., *Mrs Delany and*

Examination of the textiles enables the viewer to unpick clues to the ways the unknown makers went about planning and executing their projects. In doing so it reveals more of the lifestyles of the needlewomen and how they worked with needle, thread and cloth. When tracked across the century, the layouts, patchwork shapes and materials selected for the work provide another route into the world of domestic needlework illustrating how women's design approaches developed over the period.

A database containing more than two hundred and twenty objects from the period 1680 to 1820 was compiled to examine the types of patchwork that were made in the period in Britain. A systematic survey of this kind has never been undertaken before. It enabled quantitative analyses of the object type, fabric used, sewing method and preferred designs. These show that women stitched a variety of patchwork objects in order to decorate both the public and private spaces in their homes, although most of the surviving patchwork was used for bedroom furnishing. This chapter employs the database to highlight how needlewomen were able to exploit the lighter cloths of the period for their needlework and reveals a change in preferred fabric type over the period that reflects the growing taste for printed cotton cloth in both dress and furnishings. It argues that one patchwork technique, mosaic patchwork, can be identified as an indicator of patchwork practised by needlewomen in better circumstances because it was a time-consuming technique that required the ready availability of paper.

The Survivors

The majority of textiles survive because they were valued by generations of owners who regarded them as repositories of memory and family history, and lived in circumstances that did not necessitate their continued use to destruction. For most households that would suggest a settled state of affairs where the family lifestyle was sufficiently high status to allow the purchase of replacement textiles as well as the safe storage of those textiles that had been retired from their original use. An example of a valued family textile is one described by Catherine Hutton when she recorded that, in 1779 she called upon her Aunt Perkins who 'promised me a

Her Circle, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); J. Styles, *Threads of Feeling The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens*, (London: The Foundling Museum, 2010); R. Scott, *Samplers*, (Oxford: Shire Publications, 2012)

calico bed-quilt which was a gown and petticoat of my grandmother's'.⁴ A label attached to the quilt, which has survived to the present day, states 'the counterpane in its present state was given to me by my aunt Perkins in preference to her other nieces because as she said I should take care of it. She was not mistaken. Catherine Hutton Sept 15 1839.'⁵

Hetherington in his examination of the work on the sociology of consumption addresses the 'disposal part of the consumption process'. He suggested that the rubbish bin is not necessarily the 'archetypal conduit of disposal' of objects and that the doorway is a better example since many objects are 'disposed of' by being removed from view and stored away. He recognised the transient status of some objects, which lose their value and importance over time, only to regain their position in the home as durable objects when later generations recognise their qualities as objects with aesthetic, historical or sentimental value. Inevitably however some transient objects may be disposed of as rubbish before any opportunity arises for their significance to be realised at a later period.⁶

Such a changing attitude to textiles over the historical period would have implications when considering how fabrics are regarded. Textiles that were made from cottons, which may have been high fashion at times in the eighteenth century, would not have the same status in the mid-nineteenth century, when cheap roller-printed cottons were exported from Lancashire across the world and when the animal fibres of silk and wool could be dyed using the new fashion colours generated from chemical dyes. The presence of eighteenth-century silk patchwork bedcovers that have been extensively repaired with nineteenth-century silks would suggest that the owners still valued the objects enough to repair them. However this may not have been the case for cotton and linen patchwork of the same period.⁷

Mrs Pullan in her *Lady's Manual of Fancy Work* typified such a disregard of cotton patchwork saying 'Of patchwork with calico, I have nothing to say. Valueless indeed must be the time of that person who can find no better use for it than to make ugly counterpanes or quilts

⁴ Mrs. C. H. Beale, ed. *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman of the Last Century Letters of Catherine Hutton*, (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1891), p.21

⁵ Hed 3649, British Quilt Heritage Project papers, The Quilt Museum and Gallery, York

⁶ K. Hetherington, 'Secondhandedness: consumption, disposal, and absent presence', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol.22, (2004), pp.157-73

⁷ Examples include a British silk patchwork coverlet dated 1765, No 16 Collection of Schloss Berlin at Castle Doorn, The Netherlands and a silk patchwork coverlet c.1735-1770, ACM 1950-257, Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service

from pieces of cotton. Emphatically is the proverb true of cotton patchwork....It is not worth either candle or gas light.’⁸

Hetherington regarded the museum as one conduit of disposal and eighteenth-century textiles have historical values that would justify their preservation in contemporary museum or private collections. However recent history suggests that this was not always the case. Past collecting practices may lead to an unbalanced view of the manufacture and use of textiles from this period because of what was saved and what was disregarded. Lou Taylor notes that, in the nineteenth century, Sir Henry Cole valued examples of costume merely as the sources for the academic study of fashion fabrics.⁹ Early accessions of patchwork in the collection of the Victoria and Albert museum were also regarded as a fabric resource.¹⁰

Hood and Ruddel highlight the need to know the reasons for the survival of a textile and indicate that their studies were hampered by the fact that many textiles in Canadian museums were collected to document local weaving.¹¹ The changes in attitude toward seventeenth century embroidery over the last three hundred years have been examined by Brooks, who notes that the embroidery went from respectable domestic needlework through invisibility to ‘rediscovered curiosity to collectable artefacts’.¹² Rose also makes clear her reservations during the examination of eighty-five eighteenth-century, quilted petticoats on the basis of a potentially, biased museum collection policy.¹³

Some of the large textile collections in museums on the eastern seaboard of the United States were established through the collecting policy of wealthy individuals, who had originally acquired textiles to decorate their own homes during and after the Colonial Revival period at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century.¹⁴ They were leaders in a revived

⁸ Mrs. Pullan, *The Lady's Manual of Fancy-Work: A Complete Instructor in every Variety of Ornamental Needle-Work*, (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1859), p.95

⁹ L. Taylor, ‘Doing the Laundry: A Reassessment of Object-based Dress History’, *Fashion Theory* 2, Issue 4, (1998), pp.337-58

¹⁰ Sue Prichard, Curator V&A, personal communication: 31 August 2011

¹¹ Hood and Ruddel, ‘Artifacts and Documents in the History of Quebec Textiles’, (1991), p.71

¹² M. Brooks, ‘“Another freak of fashion”: Collectors, Collecting, Connoisseurship and Changing Views of 17th century English Embroideries’, *Text*, Vol. 39, (2011-12), pp.12-7

¹³ C. Rose, ‘Bought, Stolen, Bequeathed, Preserved: Some Sources for the Study of Eighteenth-century Petticoats’, in Hayward and Kramer, *Textiles and Text*, (2007), pp.114-21

¹⁴ Such collectors were then involved with the establishment of fine museum collections such as Henry Francis du Pont at The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, De., John D. and Abby Rockerfeller at Colonial

interest in Americana and, as such, made collecting decisions based on what fitted the perceived 'classic' American textile such as a typical patchwork quilt. However their decisions were frequently guided by influential interior decorators and antique dealers and they often bought items with a British provenance. Henry Francis du Pont was in regular correspondence with dealers such as Nancy McClelland, Bertha Benkard and Elinor Merrell and the renowned Cora Ginsberg provided textiles for the collections at both Winterthur and Colonial Williamsburg.¹⁵

Documenting Quiltmaking

When documenting her survey of quiltmaking in Devon, Somerset and Cornwall in 1937, Hake wrote 'If a survey of each county could be made within the next few years, it is reasonably certain that some remarkable evidence... would be forthcoming from the last remaining traces of this fascinating art.'¹⁶ However it was some decades later before such surveys of quiltmaking were carried out on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the last quarter of the twentieth century there was a revival of interest in quiltmaking in the United States that was led to a degree by the response to a seminal quilt exhibition at the Whitney Museum of Art, New York in 1971 and a nationwide quilt competition, which was set up as part of the celebrations running up to the country's bicentennial in 1976. A renewed interest in the American past and the country's heritage and culture encouraged a respect for craft making traditions and increased the value of surviving artefacts.

A quilt dealer in Kentucky noted that local quilts were being sold to out-of-state collectors and proposed a project to locate and document quilts and use a selection of the finds to stage a major exhibition and publish in a book. Following his urgings, The Kentucky State Quilt Project 1800-1900 was initiated in 1980 and went on to document 1200 quilts.¹⁷ The positive response from owners, exhibition visitors and book buyers created a momentum that encouraged others to document the past through quilts in a similar way. In her review of quilt documentation

Williamsburg, Va., Electra Havemeyer Webb at the Shelburne Museum, Vt. and Henry and Helen Flynt at Historic Deerfield, Mass.; also see L. Eaton, *Quilts in a Material World: Selections from the Winterthur Collection*, (New York: Abrams in association with The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 2007) p.164

¹⁵ Eaton, *Quilts in a Material World*, (2007), pp.164-87

¹⁶ E. Hake, *English Quilting Old and New*, (London: Batsford, 1937), Preface

¹⁷ J. Holstein and J. Finley, *Kentucky Quilts 1800-1900: The Kentucky Quilt Project*, Louisville, (Kentucky: The Kentucky Quilt Project Inc., 1982)

projects from 1980 to 1989, Humphrey noted that thirty five other States initiated or completed projects by the end of the decade and the phenomenon continued into the next century.¹⁸

After a decade of documenting thousands of quilts, quilt historians recognised that there was a need to appraise the current state of quilt study and to review the methodology.¹⁹ While recognising the value of the documentation projects as vehicles for collecting data about quilts, it was acknowledged that there had been only limited historical analysis and interpretation and the inconsistencies in data collecting methods meant that the resulting State databases were incompatible.²⁰ Gunn, in her review of quilt scholarship in 1992, recognised the variability of research over the previous twenty years and highlighted the need for careful interpretation of any new data in order to discard quilting myths which were ‘characteristic of much of the early decorative arts scholarship’.²¹

Holstein was the first to suggest a standardised method for quilt documentation in 1983, but, although the many documentation project organisers did speak to each other and share information, his suggested standard documentation form did not achieve wholesale acceptance.²² Since the majority of the projects were planned to be self-contained documentation processes with the end result of an exhibition or publication, compatibility did not appear to be crucial. The majority of the project books were set out as chronological descriptions of quilting within the State with accompanying examples of quilts usually selected for their outstanding quality, unusual features or interesting stories about the quilt and the maker and there were few examples of statistical analysis, which could have led to inter-state comparisons.²³

¹⁸ C. Humphrey, *1980-1989 Quilt Documentation Projects: Exploring the Roots of a National Phenomenon*, MA thesis University of Nebraska-Lincoln, (2010), available at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cehsdiss/84>, accessed: 31 May 2011

¹⁹ The North Carolina Quilt Documentation project recorded over 10,000 quilts and the Kansas project more than 13,000; Humphrey, *Quilt Documentation Projects*, (2010), p.36

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.26-31

²¹ V. Gunn, ‘From Myth to Maturity: The Evolution of Quilt Scholarship’, *Uncoverings*, Vol. 13, (1992), pp.192-205

²² Humphrey, *Quilt Documentation Project*, (2010), p.30

²³ State Project books include H. Carter, *Virginia Quilts First Search for Virginia-made Quilts: Beginning in Northern Virginia 1987*, (Vienna, Virginia: The Continental Quilting Progress, 1987); L. Horton, and L. R. Myers, *Social Fabric: South Carolina’s Traditional Quilts*, (Columbia, South Carolina: The University of South Carolina, 1987); G. Seaman Allen and N. Gibson Tuckhorn, *A Maryland Album: Quilting Traditions 1634-1934*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Rutledge Hill Press, 1995)

Drawing on the disciplines of artefact study found in material cultural studies, Richards, Martin-Scott and Maguire highlighted the shortcomings of the quilt documentation process by recognising the unsystematic way it was often carried out and the sparseness of any ensuing interpretation of the data. They reviewed the research models that had been proposed by Fleming, the New Brunswick seminar and Pearce in the context of quilt documentation and their research demonstrated that State quilt documentation projects had seldom investigated or adopted similar methodologies.²⁴ In particular, they expressed concern about the intuitive judgements that can be made by knowledgeable researchers who did not utilise a strict methodology.²⁵ Elsley took this last point further by highlighting the different approaches to research and interpretation that are shown by knowledgeable practitioners who have an interest in quilt studies and those who have an academic background in history or folk history, but with little practical knowledge of the craft.²⁶

Since 2003, steps have been taken to bring the documentation of American quilts together into one source. Data from a variety of State documentation projects has been transposed into a standardised format and is now available at The Quilt Index, an online site run by Michigan State University, The Quilt Alliance and Matrix.²⁷ The records from the projects together with a number of large institutional quilt collections still appear separately in the Index although specific styles and periods can be searched across all the records

Inspired by the American State projects, The Quilters' Guild established the British Quilt Heritage Project in 1990. The Project's aim was to document items made from patchwork, quilting and appliqué before 1960. More than 4000 objects were recorded over the next three years. The British Quilt Heritage Project was unusual in that the records were utilised for quantitative analysis. Statistical results were employed in order to make statements about chronology and to define specific national and regional features of British quilting in the book that was published in 1995. The book adopted a different approach from previous Project

²⁴ E. McClung Fleming, 'Artefact Study: A Proposed Model', *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 9, (1974), pp.153-73; 'Towards a Material History Methodology' *Material Culture Review*, Vol. 22, (1985), pp.31-40 later published as R. S. Elliot, 'Towards a Material History Methodology' in S. M. Pearce, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.109-24; S. Pearce, S. 'Thinking about Things' in Pearce, *Interpreting Objects*, (1994), pp.125-32; the literature concerning material culture studies is examined in the Introduction

²⁵ E. Richards, S. Martin-Scott and K. Maguire, 'Quilts as Material History: Identifying Research Models', *Uncoverings*, Vol. 11, (1990), pp.148-63

²⁶ J. Elsley, 'Making Critical Connections in Quilt Scholarship', *Uncoverings*, Vol. 16, (1995), pp.229-43

²⁷ The Quilt Index available at <http://www.quiltindex.org/>

publications in that a variety of quilt styles were treated separately and the development of some of the styles over time and across the country addressed.²⁸

When establishing the method of recording items for the Project, the Guild consulted organisers of a number of the American State projects, but felt that the traditions of British quilting were sufficiently different to justify the creation of a new documentation form. The size of the form and the number of fields recorded had grown considerably since the first documentation project in Kentucky in 1980 when a one-page form sufficed. The five-page, British form was in two parts; the first recorded family history and provenance and the second was devoted to the physical description of the quilt including design and layout, materials, construction method and dating. The merits of such an intense focus on documenting the minutiae have to be offset against the variable quality of the appraisal and recording processes; quilt experts who participated in the Project acknowledged that it was very easy to miss out part of the record due to pressure of time and some of the records have since been found to be incomplete. They admitted that, when there was little time available for detailed appraisal because of an overwhelming response of quilt owners to the Project events, they responded to the objects being recorded, in an intuitive way.²⁹ The Project's approach to artefact documentation and study evolved into one more akin to that proposed by Montgomery rather than Fleming, The New Brunswick group or Pearce in that the conclusions reached by the Project participants, sometimes, 'drew on a connoisseur's knowledge of an object group rather than a technical checklist'.³⁰

Recording Eighteenth-century Patchwork Objects: The Methodology for this Research

The majority of the national or state documentation projects resulted in records of thousands of items and the size of the sampling justified the extensive recording of physical features, however subtle the differences, by using a large number of data fields. In the present research it was decided that a more pragmatic approach to recording of data would be required, since an initial survey of existing texts suggested that the number of surviving objects might be small. It was estimated that about 200 items might be found.

²⁸ J. Rae et al., *Quilt Treasures: The Quilters' Guild Heritage Search*, (London: McDonald Books, 1995)

²⁹ Personal experience of the Project events and frequent personal communications with Project colleagues

³⁰ See Introduction, pp.7-10; C. F. Montgomery, 'The Connoisseurship of Artefacts' in T. J. Schlereth, ed., *Material Culture Studies in America*, (New York: Altamira Press, 1999), pp.143-52

In order to obtain significant results from such a sampling and recognising that some records might be incomplete, the data was limited to a small number of fields. Basic records provided general information such as dimensions, broad definitions of fabric type together with an approximate estimate of date of making, while images of the item contributed further detail about the design and layout, use of particular pattern shapes and colour. The amount of information about the provenance and the maker was variable. Less likely to be available were the methods of construction including the presence or absence of patchwork templates, an accurate dating of the piece and the precise definition of fabrics used (see Appendix 2).

By limiting the fields of the survey to a smaller number, it was hoped that viable data would be obtained despite the inadequate records that related to some of the objects. However it was accepted that the many gaps in the data, which result from the sourcing of objects from institutional and private collections as well as including items recorded in documentation projects or sold at auction, made the classic material cultural approach to artefacts analysis impossible to apply in this study. These approaches rely upon a rigorous physical examination of a group of artefacts and external constraints made this impractical for this study. In many cases, the information was obtained by examining an image of the object alone, with the addition of the most basic of information such as dimension and function.

All objects incorporating needlework which featured different coloured or patterned pieces of fabric pieced together to make a larger whole were included in the survey. Quilts, where the top of the bedcover was made from joined widths of the same fabric, were excluded. Some of the items in the survey included appliqué, which is a decorative technique where pieces of fabric are stitched to a backing fabric to make a pleasing pattern or figurative images. Broderie perse appliqué, which is known as chintz appliqué in the USA, is made by cutting complete motifs from a variety of large-scale furnishing fabrics and applying them to a backing fabric. This particular appliqué technique was also included in this survey, but no comprehensive survey of this technique was attempted because previous work had considered this style.³¹

³¹ Work has already been carried out into Broderie Perse (chintz appliqué) including late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century examples of British and American Broderie Perse bedcovers, see C. Ducey, *Chintz Applique: From Imitation to Icon*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: International Quilt Study Center and Museum, 2008); C. Ducey, 'From the United Kingdom to the United States: The Evolution of Chintz Appliqué Quilts', *Quilt Studies*, 11, (2010), pp.35-64

This study focused on British patchwork and the majority of the objects were found in British collections and auction houses. The survey was extended into American public collections where items of both British and American provenance can be found. Many items with no provenance in institutions in the United States had possibly been brought to America by immigrants or were acquired from British dealers. Objects with a known American provenance were not included in the survey although reference to some of these American artefacts will be made in this and the following chapters (see Appendix 3).

Few of the objects were dated and most lacked provenance information that could provide a precise date. The majority of the objects had only been ascribed a wide date by using analysis of the colours, patterns and weaving or printing techniques to be found in the patchwork fabrics. A patchwork object is only as old as the youngest fabric, but care was taken to differentiate between fabrics used in the original needlework and fabrics from a later period that had been used for repair.

Some institutions assigned a broad date range to their artefacts in order to allow for some inaccuracies in the dating of the fabrics. For this survey the given date ranges was used. An object given a wide-ranging date covering the end of the eighteenth century clearly could be regarded as coming within the period of this research despite uncertainty over accurate dating. Inevitably there is less confidence about object date ranges close to the end of the research period. This raises some uncertainty about whether they could be considered to fall within the remit of this research unless they include a specific date or come with provenance details.

What is Eighteenth Century Patchwork?

As discussed earlier in the chapter, it is more likely that better-quality patchwork objects would survive from the period and almost all of the items in the survey are decorative pieces with an apparent planned design even if the designs were carried out with lesser or greater skill. Two rare exceptions do not show such a clear attempt at decorative design. The first is a quilt from the last quarter of the eighteenth century, which was made by stitching together twenty square and rectangular pieces of printed linens and cotton. The fabrics contain a variety of floral patterns and some reference numbers drawn in black ink and possibly were trial pieces produced at a

print works (see Fig. 1).³² The second is a quilt made in the early part of the nineteenth century with patchwork on both sides showing some attempt at basic design. It contains a variety of scraps of cottons including a number of strips bearing the end-of-piece printers' frame and stamp marks dating from 1808 to 1813.³³ These marks were stamped at the end of a piece of calico by excise officers, who inspected calico print works and the frame marks included details of the length and breadth of the cloth as well as the year. Usually such marks would be cut off the unmarked rest of the cloth before retail (see Fig. 2).³⁴ These two bedcovers could be regarded as

OBJECT	NUMBER	MAIN FABRIC		
		Silk	Cotton/Linen	Wool
Quilt	77	7	70	
Coverlet	102	7	92	3
Cot/doll quilt	4	1	3	
Bed Furnishings	4		4	
Chair seat cover	1		1	
Banner	1		1	
Chasuble	1	1		
Maniple	1	1		
Pocket	7		7	
Sewing case	5	2	3	
Cushion	6	6		
Fragment	13	4	9	
Total	222	29	190	3

Table 1.1 Surviving British patchwork objects, 1680-1820. Type of object and predominant fabric in each object.

³² Coverlet database 160, Collection of Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester T.2012.7; reference the Whitworth Art Gallery accession records

³³ Quilt database 13, Private collection

³⁴ The marks were required for excise duties. The frame mark was stamped on the cloth before printing and the stamp mark after printing. Dr. Philip Sykas, personal communication: summer 2003

examples of patchwork where fabric was stitched together not so much for decorative effect, but rather simply to make a larger, bed-sized piece of cloth. They may, therefore, represent instances of the type of patchwork made by a needlewoman from a lower social class.

The results from the database confirm the belief that patchwork was commonly used to decorate the bedroom through the period (see table 1.1 above). A quilt and one curtain survive from a bed furnishing set in Levens Hall, Cumbria made in the early eighteenth century (see Fig. 3) and a nineteen-piece set of bed hangings, including a bedcover, comes from a room that was extensively decorated with patchwork in the first decade of the nineteenth century (see Fig. 4).³⁵ Four more objects were curtains or valances from sets of bed hangings. Records suggest that these examples are not exceptional. Patchwork bed curtains, counterpane, cushions and a curtain cover for a night chest were stolen at Hampton Court in 1771 and two bedsteads with patchwork hangings and window curtains to match were sold at auction in 1811.³⁶

The majority of the 222 recorded objects are large, finished pieces of decorative needlework and from their size it can be assumed that they were used as bedcovers. Seventy seven were quilted and one hundred and two either single-layer or lined pieces.³⁷ Two of the woollen pieces dated 1766 and 1820 are the size of bedcovers, but given the weight of the finished pieces could possibly have been made for display on a wall.³⁸ Three smaller items appear to be cot covers and one was the size suitable for a doll bed.

A total of one hundred and eighty six items relate to bedroom furnishing and the survival of such a large number may be an indication of how bedroom textiles were regarded. Bedroom furnishings were often made by a woman prior to marriage or later during her married life and frequently remained in her possession to be passed to daughters or bequeathed to her descendants after her death. In this way, Ellen Stock, nee Weeton, of Wigan, Lancashire sent some heirlooms to her daughter in 1824, writing ‘the piece of patchwork is of an old quilt, I made it above 20

³⁵ Curtain and quilt database 103 and 104, Collection of Levens Hall, Cumbria; bed hangings and bedcover database 52, Collection of Norwich Museums

³⁶ *Derby Mercury*, Friday 10 May 1771, p.3, *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 25 May, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, accessed: 9 May 2012

³⁷ See Chapter 2 *Beds and Bedcovers* for a discussion on how such bedcovers may have been defined

³⁸ Coverlet database 100, Collection of Sevenoaks Museum k1792; Appliqué coverlet, database 210, Collection of V&A, T23-2007

years ago'.³⁹ The significance of these bequests together with the size of the bedcovers may be sufficient to allow a disproportionately high survival rate for patchwork bedcovers. Museums and private collectors may also have been guilty of showing a bias toward collecting larger pieces, such as bedcovers, since the smaller items do not seem to have the same survival rate.

Swift in his *Directions to Servants in General*, published after his death in 1745, but begun over twenty eight years before, told waiting maids that they could no longer profit from their employment by benefiting from the gift of cast-off clothing, which had a value in the second-hand trade. Their 'Comforts and Profits' had been lessened by 'that execrable Custom got among Ladies, of trucking their old Cloaths for *China*, of turning them to cover easy Chairs, or making them into Patch-work for Skreens, Stools, Cushions, and the like'.⁴⁰ A late eighteenth-century cotton, chair seat cover was recorded in the database, but with no provenance (see Fig. 5).⁴¹ No other patchwork coverings for furniture were found despite an inventory of 1695 including a 'patchwork Counterpain & 2 stools of ye same' and Joseph Briggs of Leeds having two patchwork stools in his best bed chamber in 1709.⁴² Horace Walpole recorded that he had an armchair of patchwork in his house at Strawberry Hill.⁴³

Patchwork cushions were mentioned in diaries, newspapers and inventories; Elizabeth Freke listed 'New Patchwork Couchin, given mee' in an inventory in 1711 and '3 Patch Work Cushions' were part of a 1762 Huntingdonshire probate inventory.⁴⁴ George Lipscomb visited Cotehele House in Cornwall in 1799 and described the last room he saw, which contained 'Stools covered with silk cushions of patch-work, and the Tables with Turkey carpeting...A Fire-

³⁹ E. Hall, E., ed., *Miss Weeton: Journal of a Governess, Vol. 2 1811-1825*, (Newton Abbot: David and Charles Reprints, 1969), p.325

⁴⁰ J. Swift, *Directions to Servants in General*, London, Chap. IX, (1745), p81

⁴¹ Chair seat cover database 82, Collection of the University of the Creative Arts, Farnham, Surrey

⁴² Corporation of London Record Office, London Metropolitan Archives, City of London, Orphans Court inventory 2513, Ralph Ingram, merchant tailor, cited in C. Browne, 'Making and Using Quilts in Eighteenth-century Britain', in S. Prichard, ed., *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*, (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), p.41; Borthwick Institute for Archives, York University: Exchequer and Prerogative Courts of York, Will of Joseph Briggs, 1710 from a sample 1706-1710

⁴³ H. Walpole, *A Description of the Villa of Mr Horace Walpole, Youngest Son of Sir Robert Walpole of Orford at Strawberry Hill, near Twickenham*, (London, 1784), p.29

⁴⁴ M. Carberry, ed., *Mrs Elizabeth Freke Her Diary 1671-1714*, (Cork: Guy and Co., 1913), p.112; AH15-21: Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, Huntingdonshire Archives and Local Studies, probate inventory, John Triston 1762

screen of patch-work of different coloured silks, and the figures of a Man and Woman in satin.⁴⁵ One group of six silk cushions survive at Cotehele, but the patchwork fire screen does not appear to have remained in the house (see Fig. 6).⁴⁶ No British patchwork fire screens were found. The only surviving example is a silk patchwork fire screen made by Deborah Hobart Clark of Danvers, Massachusetts, USA in the period 1730 to 1750.⁴⁷

Small personal patchwork items may have been less likely to survive. A woman could carry a patchwork pocket, work bag, housewife or sewing case on her person, but, being small, they would be easily lost or stolen and with regular use would eventually wear out (see Fig.7). Owners and makers of such objects may have regarded them as transient objects, which would not be expected to last long enough to be passed on to the next generation. Elizabeth Hordes identified a pair of pockets that had been stolen from her home saying ‘the pockets are mine, they are patch work of my own doing’.⁴⁸ Anna Larpent in her detailed daily record of the needlework projects she undertook, recorded that she ‘worked patchwork for a workbag’.⁴⁹

Seven patchwork pockets, four sewing cases and one fragment of a sewing case were recorded.⁵⁰ Made from silk ribbons, one sewing case was kept by the West Country descendants of the maker who had dated and signed it S H in 1754 (see Fig.8). It was part of a collection of family needlework that was passed down to the twentieth century.⁵¹ The fragment of a sewing

⁴⁵ G. Lipscomb, *A Journey into Cornwall, through the Counties of Southampton, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset & Devon*, (Warwick, 1799), p.305

⁴⁶ Cushions database 209, collection of National Trust, Cotehele, 348284.1-7

⁴⁷ Collection of Danvers Historical Society, Danvers, Mass., USA 1893.49.1

⁴⁸ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, December 1794 trial of Elizabeth Harrison and Mary Quinlan (t17941208-22), accessed: 2 January 2012

⁴⁹ Larpent, A. M. June 19 1795, *Diaries Vol. 1*, British Library M1016/1

⁵⁰ Pocket database 76, Collection of National Museums of Scotland 1964.1473; pair of pockets database 172, Collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Museum Winterthur Museum, DE, 1960.1013.1,10; pocket database 173, Collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, DE, 1960.0195; pocket database 174, Collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, DE, 1960.0249; pocket database 188, Collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, DE, 1960.0250; pocket database 189, Collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, DE, 1967.01392; pocket database 208, Cora Ginsberg Gallery, NY, sale catalogue 2013; sewing case database 158, Collection of V&A T.285-1984; fragment of sewing case database 159, London Metropolitan Archives, A/FH/A/9/1/179: Foundling Hospital Billet Book, 1764-7; sewing case database 161, Collection of Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Services; sewing case database 207, Cora Ginsberg Gallery, NY, sale catalogue 2013; sewing case database 240, Collection of University for the Creative Arts, Farnham, Surrey 7970

⁵¹ Sewing case database 158

case was left as an identifying token with a baby boy at the London Foundling Hospital in 1767 and survived only because it formed part of the Hospital's records (see Fig. 9).⁵²

A small piece of patchwork measuring 69 by 71 centimetres carries an inscription 'Peace Give God the Praise Blucher and is signed E Bythewood 1814 (see Fig. 10). It has been suggested that this is a unique example of a patchwork banner that was made to display during Blucher's victory tour through parts of southern England during the premature peace celebrations in 1814. Blucher passed up and down the Portsmouth to London road during June 1814 and it has been speculated that Elizabeth Blythewood made the banner in readiness for his passage through Kingston on Thames during that month.⁵³

Two pieces stand out from the large group of patchwork objects that were made for domestic or personal use. While the latter had secular functions and have suffered the general wear and tear, alterations and repairs expected of household objects, the patchwork chasuble and maniple, which have been in the possession of the Catholic Arundell family of Wardour Castle were clearly connected to the celebration of the Mass and as such have been venerated to be passed down the generations in a largely unaltered state. The chasuble and maniple were not skilfully made, but they contain high quality silks and their shape was appropriate for their function requiring no alteration over the years. Such objects of religious significance would have been used with respect and stored with care after the Mass (see Fig. 11).⁵⁴

A number of fragments of patchwork were recorded during the survey but none had provenance information that would suggest what they were intended to be, if finished. However the majority of the fragments are large enough to suggest that their future function would have been as bedcovers.

Sewing Techniques

Four main methods of patchwork construction were noted: mosaic; seamed; whip stitched and inlaid. In addition, appliqué was recorded and examples of Broderie perse appliqué noted.

⁵² Sewing case database 159

⁵³ Banner database 48, Collection of Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service ACM 1956.53; unpublished research by Dr. Alison Carter, former curator at Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service, personal communication: June 2010

⁵⁴ Chasuble and maniple database 9 and 10, Private collection

1. Mosaic Patchwork

The mosaic patchwork method, although time-consuming, is very accurate and can be used to produce complex designs as well as simple repeat patterns. In the method fabric is wrapped over paper shapes (templates) with the seam allowance taken to the back and secured down with tacking (basting). The wrapped patchwork pieces are whip stitched (oversewn) together. The paper templates control the shape of the patchwork pieces. Needlewomen prepared the papers by cutting out geometric shapes, such as triangles or hexagons, using a wooden or metal template guide or by drawing a design on paper and then cutting the paper design apart into component pieces (see Appendix 4). Once the patchwork is stitched, the paper templates are usually removed and if the patchwork was made using a repeating, geometric shape, the template could be recycled for another needlework project (for detail of the technique see Fig. 12).

Seventy six objects from the whole period were recorded as being made using the mosaic patchwork technique and related techniques only or in part of the object. Of the twenty three objects from the period up to the last quarter of the eighteenth century, seventeen had details about their construction method; thirteen were constructed using the mosaic patchwork technique using either paper or fabric templates together with one using an unique adaptation of the mosaic technique, two were noted as having whip-stitched (oversewn) seams and one was made using the inlaid technique.

Twenty finished mosaic patchwork items from across the period were recorded as still having paper templates inside the work. A silk patchwork bedcover dated 1718 and another, probably dated 1735 to 1770, contain paper templates and it would appear in these cases that the makers planned this by tacking (basting) the fabric and paper together through the seam allowance at the back of the work and the paper template only (see Figs. 13 and 14). This would ensure that large tacking stitches are not visible at the front of the work and the top surface of the silk used for the patchwork pieces would not be damaged by these stitches.⁵⁵

Recent developments in the use of transmitted light photography have been used to uncover the paper templates inside the 1718 patchwork bedcover. The images produced during

⁵⁵ Coverlet database 59 Collection of The Quilt Museum, York 2000-11-A; coverlet database 47 Collection of Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service ACM 1950.257

the project revealed papers of various types bearing handwritten, printed or hand-drawn marks. The handwritten and printed marks demonstrate that some of the paper was re-cycled. Whereas, the hand-drawn marks show evidence of the designing and drafting stages of the making of the coverlet, added guidelines and reference marks demonstrate the care taken by the maker to ensure that the piecing technique was as accurate as possible.⁵⁶ Lining up marks and numbering to indicate the order of construction have also been observed on paper templates in other patchwork objects, including a late eighteenth-century cotton patchwork bedcover (see Fig. 15) and a unfinished piece of patchwork made by Sarah Ann Chalk in 1802 (see Fig. 56).⁵⁷

The use of paper is discussed further in Chapter 5. However it should be noted here that a needlewoman's use of paper for templates, even if recycled, suggests that she could afford to 'waste' paper for her sewing project. The ready availability of paper should be considered when examining the social class of the makers of patchwork in the long eighteenth century. Those makers with sufficient wealth to afford to use paper in this way are also likely to have been those with leisure time available to devote to the time-consuming mosaic patchwork method.

Paper templates have been found in two American silk patchwork bedcovers, but do not appear to have been made using the true mosaic patchwork technique.⁵⁸ One appears to have been made by an obscure method where the paper templates overlap each other at the back.⁵⁹ In the other the silk fabric pieces appear to have been seamed together into units or blocks. Each block was then backed with a paper template before the blocks were stitched together so it would appear that the paper shapes only helped control the shape of the patchwork in a general way. It

⁵⁶ K. Thompson, and M. Halliwell, 'Who Put the Text in Textiles? Deciphering Text Hidden within a 1718 Coverlet: Documentation of Papers Hidden an Early Eighteenth-century Coverlet using Transmitted Light Photography', in M. Hayward and E. Kramer, eds., *Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the Links Between Archival and Object-based Research*, AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies Third Annual Conference, 11-13 July 2006, (London: Archetype Publications, 2007), pp.237-44; B. Long, 'Uncovering Hidden Marks on the 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 9, (2008), pp.62-83

⁵⁷ Coverlet database 163, Private owner, reference British Quilt Heritage Project 2008; fragment database 54, Private owner

⁵⁸ D. Kraak, 'Early American Silk Patchwork Quilts', P. Benes, ed., *Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption*, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, (1997), p.20, footnote 28

⁵⁹ Collection of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1926.934

has been suggested that someone described the mosaic patchwork technique to the maker, but that she had never actually seen the method worked or a finished project.⁶⁰

Three objects contained fabric templates instead of paper. For example, the Wardour Castle chasuble and maniple were backed with coarsely woven, scrim-type fabric templates. This fabric is soft and pliable so that it probably did not provide a sharp edge over which the patchwork fabrics could be wrapped and this has resulted in a piece of work with coarsely-worked stitches. An early eighteenth-century set of patchwork bed hangings in an unusual, clamshell design were stitched with a technique that used patchwork pieces that were prepared in the mosaic patchwork method using fabric templates, but which were then applied in rows like overlapping tiles on a roof (see Fig. 16). The fabric templates appear to be the same quality as the cloth on the front of the work and this has probably allowed a more accurate shaping of the pieces than those seen in the chasuble and maniple.⁶¹

One feature that is often seen in mosaic patchwork made using printed cloth is extra patterning in the patchwork shapes produced by selective cutting of specific motifs on the printed cloth (fussy cutting in modern parlance). When the ‘fussy cut’ pieces were joined together they produced kaleidoscopic effects. Such careful cutting would result in large wastage of cloth as the needlewoman picked out the parts of the pattern in the cloth that she wished to highlight and could be another indicator of patchwork made by needlewomen in better circumstances. (see Figs. 17, 18 and 48)

2. Seamed Patchwork

The method for seamed patchwork is the same as that used to sew the components of a garment together. The seam is usually stitched with a running stitch although back stitch has been observed occasionally. This patchwork can be much less accurate than mosaic patchwork relying on the maker to cut fabric pieces in accurate shapes and to join the pieces with a consistent seam allowance. The advantage of the method is that the maker would find it quicker to stitch than mosaic patchwork and it does not require a ready source of paper for templates. Where the back of the work can be seen in un-quilted or un-lined objects in the survey, it would seem that the

⁶⁰ Collection of Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, De., 1957.48, see Eaton, *Quilts in a Material World*, (2007), p.65

⁶¹ Bed hangings database 117, Collection of V&A, T.242.F.1908

amount of seam allowance taken for mosaic patchwork is often larger than that for seamed patchwork. Very narrow or scant seams were frequently observed, which would be an indicator of the maker carefully husbanding her fabric stocks (for detail of the technique see Fig. 19).

3. Whip-stitch Patchwork

Another method of stitching patchwork pieces together without paper templates uses the whip stitch. The patchwork pieces were prepared by finger pressing turnings (or seam allowances) to the wrong side of the cloth before the pieces were joined by whip stitching (oversewing) them together along the folded edges. Unfortunately most of the items in the survey did not have information regarding the stitching technique so that it was not possible to quantify how many non-mosaic patchwork items were made using the seamed and how many the whip stitch method (for detail see Fig. 20).

4. Inlaid or Intarsia Patchwork

One object, dated 1766, was made from thick woollen fabrics so that there was no need for seam allowances due to the felted nature of the cloth.⁶² It was constructed using the inlaid or intarsia patchwork method. To work this method the maker used paper patterns to cut the components of the patchwork design out of thick woollen cloth before butting and then whip stitching the pieces together. The thick wool pieces are treated in the same way as pieces of wood to be used for marquetry, which is often seen as decoration in furniture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

This labour-intensive inlay technique is observed more frequently in continental European patchwork from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The greatest concentration of objects originated in Scandinavia and the Saxony-Silesia area in central Europe.⁶³ The continental examples appear to have been made as cloth pictures to be used as wall hangings as well as bed covers; a pragmatic decision considering the heavy weight of the larger items. Many of the surviving eighteenth-century inlaid patchwork examples appear to have religious or

⁶² Coverlet database 100, Collection of Sevenoaks Museum, k1792

⁶³ D. Neuland-Kitzerow, S. Joram and E. Karasek, ed., *Inlaid Patchwork in Europe from 1500 to the Present*, (Berlin: Museum Europäischer Kulturen Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2009)

military connections. It has been suggested that regimental tailors or members of religious institutions may have been involved in their manufacture.⁶⁴

The only eighteenth-century British inlaid patchwork features the royal coat of arms in the centre and an inscription celebrating George III's coronation together with the date of 1766 and the initials J. A. It has been associated with Jeffrey Amherst, who was commissioned into the British army and eventually led the army to victory over the French in Canada in 1760. It has been suggested that the piece was made by military tailors from his regiment and may have been stitched while he served on the continent (see Fig. 21).⁶⁵

It is argued that the European inlaid patchwork tradition was the forerunner of the mosaic patchwork technique. This latter technique may have evolved as a way of using cloth that frayed and therefore required seam allowances. The wrapped pieces for mosaic patchwork, with their paper templates, would be butted together and stitched in a similar way to the non-fraying woollen pieces of inlaid patchwork. The paper shapes could have been used as patterns for cutting out the wool shapes in inlaid patchwork as well as being used as paper templates in mosaic patchwork.

5. Appliqué

The technique of appliqué, where fabric shapes are applied to a backing fabric and stitched down, was rarely observed in objects before the end of the eighteenth century. Exceptions include a 1726 silk patchwork coverlet containing patchwork in the square blocks, but with the date and initials I N applied to the centre panel (see Fig. 22).⁶⁶ Anna Tuels's mother pieced a quilt containing square blocks of isosceles triangles in the 1780s, probably in New England, USA, but applied the date 1785, an inscription to her daughter and four red hearts to the centre of the quilt.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ E. Karasek, 'On the History of European Inlaid Patchworks', in Neuland-Kitzerow, Joram and Karasek, *Inlaid Patchwork*, (2009), pp.9-20

⁶⁵ S. Gosling, 'Soldiers' Patchwork, so-called Amherst', in Neuland-Kitzerow, Joram and Karasek, *Inlaid Patchwork*, (2009), pp.290-92

⁶⁶ Coverlet 1726 database 102, Collection of the McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal, Canada, M972.3.1

⁶⁷ Quilt dated 1785, Collection of the Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn. USA, 1976.75

The lack of appliqué is notable since some of the recorded patchwork designs were extremely complicated, requiring careful pattern drafting, the use of valued paper and time-consuming, accurate stitching. Appliqué would have been a means of achieving similar effects less laboriously. The 1718 silk patchwork coverlet includes many figurative designs, which were pieced using the mosaic patchwork technique; a challenge for the maker, but, despite this, she did not resort to appliqué. A patchwork bedcover dated 1765, which was part of Kaiser Wilhelm's property when he removed to Castle Doorn in The Netherlands after World War I, also contains complex designs worked in mosaic patchwork including the British Royal coat of arms and the two associated mottoes of 'Honi Soit Qui Mal y Pense' and 'Dieu et Mon Droit' (see Fig. 23).⁶⁸ Such complexity of piecing would be rejected in favour of appliqué by most modern needlewomen. Yet appliqué does not seem to have been considered, possibly because it does not appear to have been one of the techniques familiar to domestic needlewomen at the time.

Appliqué was used on some textiles from the period and was an important feature on court liveries such as herald's tabards and saddlecloths as well as ecclesiastical robes and hangings. However such textiles were produced in professional workshops. This had led some historians to suggest that, although appliqué required techniques that differed from high-status metal thread work, it was classed as embroidery and was usually the work of professional embroiderers.⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that one mid-eighteenth century patchwork quilt containing a large amount of appliqué work, has some provenance information suggesting that it was professionally made (see Fig. 24).⁷⁰

A fragment of a patchwork bedcover in the Colonial Williamsburg collection contains carefully pieced mosaic patchwork blocks together with applied figurative motifs in the centre of the blocks and along the borders as well as applied slips of embroidery designs. The appliqué motifs were prepared by building up a design on paper pieces and then stitching the completed motif to the patchwork blocks. Embroidered slips were available for sale to be added to domestic

⁶⁸ Coverlet database 59 Collection of The Quilt Museum, York 2000-11-A; Coverlet database 8, Schloss Berlin Collection, Castle Doorn, Netherlands 11198

⁶⁹ S. M. Levy, *An Elizabethan Inheritance: The Hardwick Hall Textiles*, (London: National Trust, 1998), p.43

⁷⁰ Bishops Court quilt database 106, Collection of V&A T. 201-1984

needlework projects and it may well be that the appliqué motifs were also prepared in a similar way (see Fig. 25).⁷¹

The database reveals a gradual appearance of the appliqué technique on a number of domestic needlework items at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. Thought to have been made in the period just before the summer of 1790, an appliqué coverlet created by Margaret King of Pertenhall, Bedfordshire is typical of this new style. The frame layout coverlet contains borders of appliqué leaves together with Broderie perse appliqué wreaths, vines, baskets and flower motifs (see definition of Broderie perse below) (see Fig. 26).⁷² Mrs King became an admirer of William Cowper, a late eighteenth-century poet and hymn writer, showering him and his companion, Mrs Unwin, with home-made gifts, including the appliqué bedcover. Cowper wrote a poem commemorating the gift and, interestingly, referred to the bedcover as patchwork. The surviving correspondence does not show that Margaret King corrected this title.⁷³ It is possible that there was no common contemporary term for the technique although the status of cloth embroidery will be considered in this context in Chapter 5

Whilst some late eighteenth-century coverlets contain testing figurative designs worked in mosaic patchwork, others show designs with some similarities made using the appliqué technique. Two patchwork bedcovers, dated 1797 and 1799, contain a large variety of figurative images including domestic articles, sewing tools, maps of the world and sports equipment which were pieced using the mosaic patchwork technique (see Fig. 27).⁷⁴ Another coverlet, thought to have been made in the period 1803-05, features mosaic patchwork representations of contemporary prints containing many male and female figures, and a centre showing George III reviewing his troops (see Fig. 28).⁷⁵

Contemporary prints were also thought to be one of the sources of inspiration for the appliqué and embroidery designs of a late eighteenth-century bedcover and accompanying pillow covers with a probable British provenance. The figures in this case are reproduced in as much

⁷¹ Coverlet fragment, database 101, Collection of Colonial Williamsburg, Va., USA 2005-1-A

⁷² Appliqué coverlet, database 232, Collection of the Cowper and Newton Museum, OLNCM.2657

⁷³ Letters to Mrs King, Saturday 14 August 1790 and Tuesday 5 October 1790, J. King, and C. Ryskamp, *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, Vol. III, Letters 1787-1831, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 406-7, 422-23

⁷⁴ Dated Sundial coverlet database 113, Collection of V&A T102.1938

⁷⁵ George III coverlet database 115, Collection of V&A T9.1962

detail as those seen on the 1803-5 George III coverlet, but the techniques used were entirely different. They included gathered and folded fabric which gave a raised, three-dimensional look to the figurative design.⁷⁶ Another linen bedcover, dated 1795, contains appliqué pictures of men and women in scenes of rural life in the borders of the frame design (see Fig. 29).⁷⁷

The appearance of these examples of complex, figurative appliqué at the end of the century is noteworthy. From this period onwards, appliqué appears more frequently in bedcovers and is often combined with patchwork designs (see Fig. 34). However the sophistication of the earlier figurative appliqué examples is seldom seen by the second decade of the nineteenth century. A frame design coverlet, probably made in the period 1810-20, contains borders of appliqué rural and religious scenes alternating with frames of patchwork in hexagons, clamshells and triangles, but in this case the appliqué design has been simplified (see Fig. 30).⁷⁸ At the very end of the period of this study, an appliqué wool coverlet made by Ann West in 1820 continues the figurative style with a complex layout of biblical and rural scenes. They also appear to have been drawn from contemporary illustrations in prints, pamphlets, school books and illustrated bibles (see Fig. 31).⁷⁹

6. Broderie perse (chintz appliqué or cut-chintz appliqué)

One specific type of appliqué is Broderie perse (also known as chintz appliqué or cut-chintz appliqué). This style of appliqué appeared in the last two decades of the eighteenth century and continued to be practiced into the following century. The technique uses complete motifs cut from large-scale printed cotton or linen. A variety of motifs such as flower heads, leaves, or branches are selected and cut out before being combined together with other motifs to create a new pattern. They were sewn down in their new combination using the appliqué technique. This style of appliqué was often employed to create Tree of Life-style designs in homage to Indian painted and printed chintzes (see Fig. 32).⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Appliqué coverlet and pillow shams, database 196, Collection of Los Angeles County Museum of Art

⁷⁷ Appliqué coverlet, database 149, Collection of Brooklyn Museum, 41.285

⁷⁸ Appliqué and patchwork coverlet, database 154, Collection of Gunnersbury Park Museum, London

⁷⁹ Appliqué coverlet, database 210, Collection of V&A, T23-2007

⁸⁰ For further detail on this technique see Ducey, *Chintz Appliqué*, (2008); Ducey, 'From the United Kingdom to the United States', (2010), pp.35-64

The apparent movement of appliqué into the compendium of domestic needlework techniques is accompanied by a change in patchwork style. Needlewomen who adopted appliqué to create figurative imagery no longer needed to stitch the time-consuming mosaic patchwork in order to produce their designs. A consequence of the growth in the use of appliqué was that during the first two decades of the nineteenth century the mosaic patchwork technique appears to have been confined to creating all-over geometric designs. Reasons for this development are discussed further in Chapter 5.

The Fabrics in Patchwork

The material life of eighteenth-century women was dominated by cloth. The purchasing, maintaining and laundering of textiles formed part of a woman's role; she stitched or repaired clothes and ensured that household furnishing and linen was maintained and cleaned. Many women had an intimate, practical knowledge of the origin, variety and quality of cloth as well as their specific uses and were fully aware of the changing tastes for fabrics over the century. The period of this study saw the growing fashion for lighter dress and furnishing fabrics, which was satisfied by the import of Indian printed and painted cotton and the later development of European printed cottons and linens, and a move away from thicker wools and heavier silks.

The changes in the fabric used for women's clothing and in the household over the century can also be seen in the patchwork of the period. A total of twenty nine objects were recorded as being made from silk and with the exception of the early eighteenth-century Levens Hall quilt and bed curtain and the clamshell bed hangings, mentioned above, all the early examples of patchwork were made predominantly from silk.⁸¹ In the second half of the century this situation changed, so that, by the 1790s, the majority of the surviving objects were made mostly from cotton or a mixture of cotton and linen. No objects were made silk and only two made from wool in the period from 1800 to 1820.⁸²

Acts of Parliament were passed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in an attempt to restrict the import, manufacture and consumption of printed cottons, in order to safeguard the British silk and wool industries. These Acts led to textile manufacturers printing on

⁸¹ Quilt and curtain, database 103 and 104, Collection of Levens Hall, Cumbria

⁸² Coverlet database 150, St Fagans National History Museum, 35.439; coverlet database 210, Collection of the Victoria and Albert museum, T23-2007

linen cloth or a mixed-fibre cloth with linen warp and cotton weft threads, both of which were exempt from the regulations. Mixed-fibre cloths were often described as cotton both at the time and also subsequently; they and linen are difficult to detect without the use of microscope. Only three linen patchwork objects were recorded. They were all from the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century.⁸³ A large number of patchwork objects from the second half of the eighteenth century described as made from cotton, are likely to contain linen or cotton/linen mix cloth, but the information available for many of the recorded objects does not make this clear.

A notable feature of the cotton and cotton/linen patchwork objects seen during the survey was that many of those from later in the century contained a large number of different fabric designs. Some examples contain fabric designs which can be grouped together to show similar colour combinations and print motifs suggesting their probable common connection to print works specialising in these colours and motifs. Fabrics were often second quality with miss-prints, printers' marks and end-of-piece markings appearing in the patchwork. The detail of seamed hexagon patchwork (see Fig. 19) demonstrates such second quality cloth.

Design Layouts

The smaller objects in the database are too small to show much planned design. However the larger pieces, in particular bedcovers, are more substantial pieces of needlework; the largest bedcover recorded was 3.75 by 3 metres. These large pieces enabled an analysis of the style of design layouts that were chosen by the makers over the period. The majority of objects show evidence of planning demonstrating that the makers were considering a decorative use for their needlework. An exception is a silk quilt made in the second half of the eighteenth century, which shows no apparent attention to design. It consists of short lengths of silk ribbon forming rectangular shapes which are laid randomly, both horizontally and vertically, in rows with no thought given to placing of the pieces (see Fig. 33).⁸⁴ The success or failure of the planning for the remaining objects may be attributable to the needlewoman's skill and experience in drafting a design and completing her project together with the time at her disposal for sewing, as well as her working and living environment.

⁸³ Database 17 and 160, Private owners; database 149, Brooklyn museum, New York, USA 41.285

⁸⁴ Quilt database 109, Collection of V&A T.117-1973

The most popular design over the entire period of study was the frame layout, which occurs in more than half of the objects. The frame design consists of a central feature around which vertical and horizontal borders or frames are placed and reflects a predominant design aesthetic of the period. This important central feature provides a focus about which the rest of the design is set (Fig. 34). A variety of types of central feature were noted in the survey. Needlewomen appear to use the centre to show off a more complicated or larger-scale patchwork pattern, to feature an earlier piece of work such as embroidery or even just a valued piece of fabric (see Fig. 35). One late-eighteenth century frame design coverlet consisted of borders of triangle and rectangular shapes, but the maker used a more complex octagon centre feature incorporating a group of printed cloths with added gold overprinting not seen elsewhere in the coverlet.⁸⁵

The frame designs seen in the survey vary from complex layouts incorporating a variety of patchwork shapes in a number of borders to simple designs with a limited number of large patchwork shapes and frames, which are often just strips of cloth without additional patchwork design (see Fig. 36).⁸⁶ It would appear that the frame layouts generally become simpler toward the end of the period with fewer, but larger rectangles and squares making up the design

A second smaller group of fifty four objects that do not fall into the frame category feature an all-over layout of repeating shapes such as hexagons, triangles, octagons or squares, which sometime appear with a distinct centre or single, defined outer border (see Fig. 37). Despite this use of a simple repeat pattern, the makers appear to have given thought to the design by considering variation in colour, pattern or tone of the fabrics chosen. The makers of many of the hexagon coverlets used a repeating pattern of hexagons, but chose a variety of dark coloured fabrics to produce a design of single, double or triple rosettes, which are set against a background of plain white cotton. Sarah Ann Chalk, when planning her patchwork in 1802, chose to give her all-over layout of hexagons more interest by alternating lines of plain and printed patchwork patches. She was one of a number of makers who still paid attention to the principle of including

⁸⁵ Coverlet database 6, Private owner

⁸⁶ Quilt database 65, Collection of The Quilters' Guild 2009-3-A

a featured centre to her work although she did not use a framed layout. Her centre contains a sixteen-point star design overlaid onto three rows of curved ‘petals’ shapes (see Fig. 56).⁸⁷

A third small group of objects feature designs that were made up of repeating blocks or units, although some also contain a central feature or outer border. The block designs are based on a square grid with the exception of one early-nineteenth century block design created using a block containing octagons, long hexagons and squares and a coverlet, featuring repeating circular units.⁸⁸ Such a layout is a practical way of designing a larger piece of needlework in which the maker stitches individual blocks separately and only later completes the work by joining them together. The blocks seen in the survey vary from simple diagonally quartered squares repeated across the work to complex designs that incorporate a variety of geometric or figurative shapes.

Patchwork Shapes

A survey of the main shapes that were seen in the patchwork designs reveals an interesting change in style towards the end of the eighteenth century. It would appear that the patchwork designs from 1700 to about 1780 were commonly based on a square grid. Seventeen out of twenty-one large patchwork items dating from the period contain this shape. The exceptions are the silk ribbon quilt, the clamshell patchwork bed hangings, and the frame quilt with circular shapes and appliqué figurative patterns, all described above.⁸⁹ The Levens Hall quilt and bed curtain also have a design that is not based on a square grid. It uses octagon, cross and long hexagon shapes, which are geometrically connected to the square (see Fig. 3).⁹⁰

While some of the square grid designs, such as that seen on a 1718 silk patchwork coverlet (see Fig. 13), have a variety of block patterns using a number of geometric shapes and figurative images, most were made up of blocks containing half-square (isosceles) triangles. The isosceles triangle was the most popular patchwork shape to be used before the end of the eighteenth century. Eleven examples include a specific diagonally-quartered block where two fabrics were selected for the opposing pairs of triangles to form an ‘hourglass’ pattern (see Fig.

⁸⁷ Fragment, database 54, Private owner

⁸⁸ Coverlet database 152, Private owner; coverlet database 115, Collection of V&A T.9-1962

⁸⁹ Quilt database 109, Collection of V&A T.117-1973; Bed hangings database 117, Collection of V&A, T.242.F.1908; quilt database 106, Collection of V&A T. 201-1984

⁹⁰ Quilt and bed curtain, database 103 and 104, Collection of Levens Hall, Cumbria

14).⁹¹ This block design occurs in later objects in the database and appears to be a pattern that continued to be popular into the nineteenth century.

During the last decade of the eighteenth century, however, the style in many of the objects shows a change although the framed or block quilt containing triangles and squares was still made. Many patchwork designs appear to become more geometrically complex with the six-sided hexagon joining the square as the shape of choice for many makers. The growth in popularity of the hexagon, generally in an all-over layout, is remarkable; no examples appear before this period, but forty seven objects with hexagons as the main shape and eight more with the hexagon as an additional shape were recorded from 1790 to 1820 (see Fig. 37). The earliest dated British survivor is a coverlet stitched by Anna Ruggles, probably in Gloucestershire, United Kingdom in 1796 (Fig. 54).⁹² Interestingly, the oldest known example of hexagon patchwork is a quilt made by Sarah Ewalt Spencer of Bedford Township, Pennsylvania, USA in 1794.⁹³ Based solely on dating of their fabrics, a number of other hexagon patchwork items also appear to have been made in the same decade.

The 1790s and the first decade of the following century also saw the use of the hexagon in interlocking patterns combined with equilateral triangles, rhomboids, diamonds and irregular pentagons in all-over designs. Octagons combined with squares and long hexagons were also used in a similar way. At the same time a number of objects contain patterns, which are very complicated incorporating a variety of geometric shapes, in either the centre feature or in blocks (see Figs. 28, 50, 51, 55, 56, 57). The majority of these items and also those with interlocking patterns were constructed using the mosaic patchwork technique which would have been the most efficient and accurate method for such complex designs. The complexity of the patchwork design combined with the mosaic patchwork technique might be used to indicate a higher social status for the maker, whereas the simple frame designs using large rectangular and square shapes that become more common toward the end of the period may indicate patchwork which was sewn together in a less privileged social environment.

⁹¹ No evidence has been found to show that any patchwork pattern was named at this period. The term 'hourglass' is used here as a simple way of referring to this block design

⁹²Coverlet database 139, Collection of the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Ne. USA 2008.040.0140

⁹³ Collection of Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Conn., USA 1982.165, I am grateful to Lynne Z. Bassett for detailed information about this quilt

This aspect of the use of geometrically more varied shapes, in particular the hexagon, is discussed further in Chapter 5 where it is argued that such shapes required a particular knowledge of geometry in order to draft templates and patterns. Their use can be related to a gradual expansion of the school curriculum for girls and the wide availability of practical geometry primers with instructions for creating the shapes.

Conclusion

The texts considering needlework and textiles, which were discussed in the introductory chapter, revealed a lack of knowledge of any widespread patchwork practice in the eighteenth century. Despite this, more than two hundred and twenty patchwork objects dating from the period 1700 to 1820 have been identified in collections in the United Kingdom and the United States, the latter mainly on the eastern seaboard. However evidence suggests that surviving patchwork objects may be an indicator of the type of patchwork practised by makers from the higher levels of society and it must be accepted that quantitative analyses of the sewing technique, design and pattern will provide data, which is more relevant to the middling and genteel classes.

This study follows on from a large number of national and state quilt documentation projects, which have been initiated in the last thirty years. However a lack of consistency in the data collecting policies of the various projects has negatively affected the opportunities to carry out trans-state or trans-national analysis of techniques, designs and patterns or a consideration of the migration of specific patchwork practices. The objects that were recorded for this study were sourced from private and museum collections and information concerning additional artefacts was extracted from documentation project records and auction catalogues. As a result, some of the items were examined at a distance using only brief records and images. The extraction of a basic amount of physical information in some cases limited the study and did not allow the most rigorous methods of material cultural study to be applied.

The large majority of surviving objects appear to have been made for decorating the home and most were intended for use in the bedroom either as bedcovers or bed furnishings. The survival of many items of bed furnishings may be due, in part, to traditions concerning bequests of bedroom objects, collecting policies that favour large textile pieces and to the development of the patchwork quilt as a cultural icon in the United States. It is suggested that smaller items,

including accessories such as pockets and needle cases, were probably not regarded with much importance at the time of making and have not been collected in numbers since.

The numbers of the patchwork objects where the sewing technique was recorded were sufficient to allow valid conclusions. Four different piecing techniques were noted: mosaic, seamed patchwork, whip stitched (over-sewn) patchwork and inlaid patchwork. Inlaid patchwork was observed on one wool coverlet only.

The mosaic patchwork technique is time consuming and required the use of paper templates. This may indicate needlework that was more likely to be practised in wealthier households where needlewomen had time to spend on their projects and had access to paper for the templates. The majority of the surviving objects from before 1780 were made using the mosaic patchwork method indicating the likelihood of most surviving objects of this period coming from households higher up the social scale.

The seamed and whip stitched patchwork techniques were quicker to use and did not require the use of paper or fabric templates. Records from public collections generally did not reveal sewing techniques and data concerning the frequency of use of these two techniques could not be obtained. However objects stitched using one of these two techniques rarely survive from earlier in the period.

While it may well be that patchwork was made in Britain before this period using these two techniques, it is possible that the European inlaid (intarsia) patchwork tradition was the forerunner of the mosaic patchwork technique. This latter technique may have evolved as a way of using cloth that frayed and therefore required seam allowances unlike the inlaid method, which was worked using thick woollen cloth. The wrapped pieces for mosaic patchwork, which contain paper templates, can be stitched together in a similar way to the non-fraying woollen pieces for inlaid patchwork. The paper shapes could have been used as patterns for cutting out the wool shapes in inlaid patchwork as well as being used as paper templates in the mosaic patchwork method.

Appliqué used alongside patchwork was uncommon until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This is despite the complexity of some of the earlier patchwork designs, which would have been easier to stitch using appliqué techniques. This finding confirms the

suggestion that appliqué was commonly practiced alongside embroidery in professional workshops and not used with such frequency in domestic needlework. However there appears to have been a gradual introduction of bedcovers with appliqué design toward the end of the period of study. A small group of appliqué pieces contain complex figurative designs, but a general simplification of the appliqué designs was observed in objects from the period 1800-1820.

The period of study marks the time when there was a change in preferred dress and furnishing fabrics from thicker wools and heavy silks to lighter cloths, in particular, printed cottons and linens. The fabrics used for patchwork reflects this changing taste for fabrics so that the majority of silk patchwork objects were dated before 1800 and few woollen or silk pieces noted after this time.

The use of images for the objects on the database allowed consideration of the design layouts of the larger pieces of bed furnishings and bed covers. The most popular design layout was the frame with a featured centre and horizontal and vertical borders of frames reflecting one of the dominant design aesthetics of the period. Frame designs became simpler toward the end of the period consisting of a few frames made up of large squares and rectangles.

The other two layouts were of blocks, usually set on a square grid, and all-over designs consisting of repeated geometric shapes, in particular, the hexagon. The block patterns were either geometric, achieved by subdividing the square using vertical, horizontal or diagonal lines or were filled with figurative images such as seen in the 1718 silk patchwork coverlet. The most common shape seen in the blocks was the isosceles triangle and was included in seventeen of the pre-1790s objects that were recorded. Eleven of these objects contained a design consisting of a diagonally quartered block with two fabrics used as for facing pairs in the design to create an 'hourglass' shape.

The use of the equal-sided, equal-angled hexagon shape was noted in nearly a quarter of the objects despite it not being recorded in any items before 1790. The appearance of this shape after this period is remarkable and marks a change in preferred patchwork design that was seen in many objects after this period. The hexagon was often associated with other geometric shapes, such as the equilateral triangle or short diamond; they all require a particular knowledge of

geometry in order to draft patterns and create design layouts. The significance of this observation in relation to girls' education is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2 Beds and Bedcovers

The modern patchwork quilt is frequently made to be displayed on the wall as an art object and not to be used as an item of bedroom furnishing. This apparent elevation of the status of patchwork is a recent phenomenon and, as such, removes the needlework from its historical position as the source of functional, if decorative, domestic textiles. However an analysis of eighteenth-century patchwork, which is the subject of Chapter 1, confirms that most surviving patchwork items from the period were bedcovers and demonstrates the importance of considering them in their correct context as coverings that were created to provide warmth and decoration on a bed.

In the eighteenth century, rugs, caddows, quilts, coverlets, counterpanes and hillings were words used to identify bedcovers. All these terms appear regularly in documents, but it is necessary to bring together documentary and material evidence in order to understand what these descriptions actually meant and how they might relate to surviving patchwork objects. A study of the use, type, fabric and design of bedcovers in relation to the bed on which they were laid, as well as the bed hangings, bedding and other bedroom textiles which may match or provide a contrast to their style, allows a better appreciation of the material culture of the bedroom. It helps discern how owners, makers, appraisers, robbers, pawnbrokers, legal officials and tradesmen categorised the bedcover types and whether they understood their differences.

The last thirty years has seen an ever-growing body of work focussed on the material culture of the long eighteenth century. This chapter considers the sources available for the study of eighteenth-century beds and bed coverings and highlights the difficulties encountered when considering non-elite bedroom furnishings. Much of the earlier work examined eighteenth-century consumption practices. It drew on the documentary evidence to be found in probate records although their sources only survived in most parts of the country from the first half of the century. The two main sources examined here - the Old Bailey Sessions Papers and probate inventories from Huntingdonshire – provided an opportunity to use records that cover the entire century and on into the period of industrial change spanning the late eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century.

References to bedcovers that were stolen or used in evidence in over thirteen hundred records of cases, 1680-1820, from the trial transcripts in the printed Old Bailey Sessions

Papers were used to consider how bedcover terminology was applied and interpreted in the long eighteenth century. The records provided information on valuations as well as frequency of use in London and Middlesex, and allowed women's voices to be heard when they give descriptive detail about their stolen household items.¹

Huntingdonshire is unusual among English counties in the survival of numerous detailed probate inventories after 1750.² More than three hundred and seventy Huntingdonshire probate records, 1680-1820, were examined to provide a provincial counterpoint to the evidence concerning bedcover ownership in the metropolis. In these inventories the bedcovers were recorded by appraisers as part of the property of a deceased resident and are not accompanied by so many identifying descriptive terms as in the Old Bailey evidence. Information regarding both bed and bedcover ownership was extracted from the inventories revealing changes in bedcover types over the century together with a marked growth in their use during the period.

The eighteenth century saw a blossoming of publications that were devoted to the explanation and grammatical use of common words with early examples composed by Bulloker, Bailey and Dyche.³ The best-known dictionary was Dr Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*, which stood out because its comprehensive coverage of terms in general use at the period without the accusations of plagiarism that were aimed at many later lexicographers.⁴ Johnson provided definitions of a number of the common terms for the 'covering of a bed' and, in this chapter, they were used as a reference point when examining the Old Bailey and Huntingdonshire sources and understanding bedcover terminology during the period.

Neither the Old Bailey records nor the Huntingdonshire probate records offered sufficient information on the social status of the bedcover owners to enable an analysis of bedcover use by rank. However the findings suggest a change in preferred bedcover types in both London and Huntingdonshire over the century. Importantly, it is argued that the findings

¹ *Proceedings of the Old Bailey 1674-1913*, available from: www.oldbaileyonline.org

² Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon 1585-1858, AH15-21, Huntingdon Archives and Local Studies, Huntingdon; available as microfilm catalogued in alphabetical and then date order

³ J. Bulloker, *The English Expositor Improv'd: Being a Complete Dictionary*, 10th edition, (London, 1707); N. Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a More Compleat Universal Etymological English Dictionary than any Extant*, (London, 1730); T. Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary; Peculiarly Calculated for the Use and Improvement of Such as are Unacquainted with the Learned Languages*, second edition (London, 1737)

⁴ S. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are Deduced from their Originals*, (London, 1755)

reveal an apparent mobility of some of the terms, which has implications for the future interpretation of documents relating to the bedroom.

Studies of Beds, Bedcovers and Bedchambers

Since Lemire introduced cotton as ‘fashion’s favourite’ in the first study that considered the relationship between a single textile commodity and its eighteenth-century users, a number of authors have examined textiles that were used in the homes of the period. Bedroom furnishings have provided topics for research whether they were the sheets stolen in London lodgings, the chosen colour of bed hangings or the subjects that made up a two-day conference on the bed.⁵ Importantly there has been a growing focus on bed covers, influenced initially by an expansion of quilt history studies in the United States where the patchwork quilt has long been regarded as a cultural icon. The contemporary appreciation of British ‘quilts’ and ‘coverlets’ saw major advances over the last fifteen years with the formation of a study group devoted to quilts, the opening of a British quilt museum and the staging of a quilt exhibition at the Victoria and Albert museum, the national museum of the decorative arts.⁶ However, the modern application of the terms of quilt and coverlet may be disconnected from eighteenth-century usage.

There is a wealth of writing about domestic life in the eighteenth-century house, but much research relates to elite houses and many texts appear to stop at the bedroom door. Design historians Fowler and Cornforth used images to expand their analysis of country house decoration from the late seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries but, inevitably, concentrated on the elite section of society.⁷ Their diagrams of curtain designs and images of

⁵ B. Lemire, *Fashion’s Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800*, (Oxford: The Pasold Research Fund and Oxford University Press, 1991); authors include A. Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter: Women’s Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); J. Styles, ‘Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and Their Furnishing in Eighteenth Century London’, in J. Styles and A. Vickery, eds., *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 61-80; B. Lemire, ‘Draping the Body and Dressing the Home: The Material Culture of Textiles and Clothes in the Atlantic World, c.1500-1800’, in K. Harvey, *History and Material Culture: A Student’s Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 85-102; A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009); D. M. Mitchell, ‘“My purple will be too sad for that melancholy room”: Furnishings for Interiors in London and Paris, 1660-1735’, *Textile History*, xi, no. 1, (2009), pp.3-28; B. Lemire, ed., *The British Cotton Trade 1660-1815 Part II International Trade and the Politics of Consumption 1690s-1730*, (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2010); Conference *Bedtime Stories: Beds and Bedding in Britain 1650-1850*, 21-22 June 2012, Temple Newsam House, Leeds

⁶ *Quilt Studies*, The Journal of the British Quilt Study Group; The Quilt Museum and Gallery, St Anthony’s Hall, York, www.quiltmuseum.org; S. Prichard, ed., *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories Untold Stories*, (London: V&A Publications, 2010)

⁷ J. Fowler and J. Cornforth, *English Decoration in the 18th Century*, (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1974)

surviving state beds and bedroom furniture give evidence of where a very small minority spent their sleeping hours. Fowler and Cornforth's work was followed in other texts on domestic interiors such as Thornton and Girouard.⁸ Saumarez Smith in his account of eighteenth-century domestic interiors was able to show, through original plans and room designs for elite buildings, how the wealthy occupied their public or socialising rooms, but his pictorial sources for information about the owners' and their servants' sleeping arrangements are not so plentiful.⁹ The publication of numerous household inventories as well as trade and sale records has further allowed historians of elite interiors to obtain a better idea of how such rooms were furnished.

When examining the life of the middling and plebeian, information concerning household furnishings is not so widely available. However, early writers saw the advantages of the quantitative study of probate inventories in order to analyse ownership and spending patterns and built on the basic groundwork provided in the published or transcribed probate records.¹⁰ Garrard, in particular, highlighted the value of probate records in the study of the English domestic interior.¹¹

McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb recognised that the eighteenth century was a time when the British showed a growing taste for new commodities as well as an expanding list of household non-essential articles that they acquired to enhance their homes.¹² McKendrick's early work on consumption was followed by Weatherill and Overton et al. They focussed on 'key goods', which through an analysis of the growth in their supply, purchase, use and possession, could demonstrate the increasing acquisitiveness of eighteenth-century households.¹³ Because there was a growing fashion for some objects such as forks and hot

⁸ M. Girouard, *Life in the English County House*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978); P. Thornton, *Seventeenth-century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981)

⁹ C. Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration: Design and the Domestic Interior in England*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1993)

¹⁰ Publications include: F. Steer, *Farm and Cottage Inventories of Mid-Essex, 1635 to 1749*, (London: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., 1969); J. S. Moore, *The Goods and Chattels of Our Forefathers: Frampton Cotterell and District Probate Inventories, 1539-1804*, (London: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., 1976); B. Trinder and J. Cox, *Yeomen and Colliers in Telford*, (London: Phillimore and Co. Ltd., 1980)

¹¹ R. Garrard, 'English Probate Inventories and their Use in Studying the Significance of the Domestic Interior 1570-1700', in A. D. van der Woude and A. Schurman, eds., *Probate Inventories: a New Source for the Historical Study of Wealth, Material Culture and Agricultural Development*, Utrecht: Afdeling Agrarische Geschiedenis Bijdragen, XXIII, (1980), pp.55-82

¹² N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England*, (London: Europa Publ., 1982)

¹³ L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988); M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean and A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750*, (London: Routledge, 2004)

drink equipment over the century, they were recognised as significant novelties and were recorded in inventories when more ‘traditional’ goods were often taken for granted. Spufford has suggested that when an object is in common use it is less likely to be listed in records saying that ‘An increased rarity of comment thus perversely argues a spread of usage’.¹⁴ However, while Weatherill’s research concentrated on utensils and household objects and, with the exception of tables, she ignored pieces of furniture; she admitted that ‘Beds would make a very meaningful study in themselves’.¹⁵

Crowley identified the eighteenth century as the time when the idea of comfort changed from an intellectual ideal of moral support and encouragement to the enhancement of physical wellbeing through the provision of an improved environment and lifestyle.¹⁶ He proposed that there was a new emphasis on physical comfort which had an influence on spending decisions. He described the bed as ‘amongst the minimum needed for comfort’ suggesting that changes in the home environment were as much led by a desire for improved health and comfort as by the social ambitions and fashionable aspirations of the owners. Overton et al noted ‘significant improvements in domestic comfort’ over the period 1600 to 1750 and suggested that the increased acquisition of familiar items such as sheets was to enhance personal comfort and was not motivated by fashion since the linen was used in the private and not the public parts of the house.¹⁷

By using surviving houses as well as architects’ plans, building historians are able to show which rooms were used as bedrooms and can give an impression of the scale of the space allotted for sleeping in relation to the public rooms in the house. Cruikshank and Burton and Ison have focussed on town houses in London, Bath and Bristol.¹⁸ Guillery moved further to uncover the history of the artisan housing in London.¹⁹ In particular, they have considered those that were constructed after the building boom of the 1720s when, according to Sumarez Smith, the classic form of the English townhouse evolved with its comparatively narrow street frontage, two stories or more plus basement and a defined

¹⁴ M. Spufford, ‘The Limitations of the Probate Inventory’, in J. Chartres and D. Hey, *English Rural Society, 1500-1800 Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.150

¹⁵ Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour*, (1988), p.204

¹⁶ J. E. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America*, (Baltimore and England: John Hopkins University Press, 2000)

¹⁷ Overton, *Production and Consumption*, (2004), pp.118-19

¹⁸ D. Cruikshank and N. Burton, *Life in the Georgian City*, (London: Viking, 1990); W. Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bath*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1948); W. Ison, *The Georgian Buildings of Bristol*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1952)

¹⁹ P. Guillery, *The Small House in Eighteenth-Century London: A Social and Architectural History*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004)

function for rooms on each floor.²⁰ However the plans that they have studied are empty footprints of a building and the rooms may have been used in different ways. Large numbers of houses in urban areas were subdivided to be occupied by more than one family. There are many estimates of the number of houses containing lodgings in London varying from nearly half in 1692 to only 10% of houses a decade later, but lodgings were a significant feature of most towns and cities at this period.²¹

Social historians of the period such as Vickery and Ponsonby have drawn on a variety of sources, including letters and diaries, to build a picture of eighteenth-century women's lives at home.²² However, much of their bedroom accounts revolve around the sleeping arrangements made, the secrets told, the arguments fought and the plans discussed and the mundane functions of making, sewing, furnishing and repairing beds and bedding may count against the frequency of references to the material evidence occurring in letters and diaries. Plumping pillows and turning mattresses are not actions worthy of note in the way that a purchase of a new bed might be.

Perhaps, as much can be learnt in editions of travellers' tales detailed in diaries and reminiscences of journeys where the curiosity about unknown accommodation and unusual bedding arrangements would justify their recording. Zacharias von Uffenbach visited Oxford in 1710 and was so fascinated by a folding bed in the house of his host, where the front of the bed lifted up to allow the bed base to drop down, that he recorded it in his travel diary.²³ Maybe because Dr. Johnson snored, but James Boswell regularly made comment about the sleeping arrangements when he recounted the story of their travels.²⁴ James Woodforde stayed overnight at the King's Head in Norwich in 1785 and slept in a little press bed 'the bed too short for me – close to a large Window and little or no Cloaths on the Bed'.²⁵ Little may be known about Jane Austen's own bedroom at her home in Steventon, but, when she travelled to Bath with her mother in 1799, she told her sister that they found lodgings in a corner house in Queens Square where they had connecting bedrooms on second floor 'two

²⁰ Saumarez Smith, *Eighteenth Century Decoration*, (1993), p.76

²¹ Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey', (2006)

²² Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, (1998); Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009); M. Ponsonby, *Stories from Home: English Domestic Interiors, 1750-1850*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

²³ C. Edwards, 'Press Bedsteads', *Furniture History*, 26, (1990), p.42

²⁴ J. Boswell, *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*, (London: Everyman Edition 1909)

²⁵ J. Beresford, *The Diary of a Country Parson Vol. 11, 1782-87*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1926), p.185

very nice sized rooms, with dirty Quilts & everything comfortable....The Beds are both as large as any at Steventon'²⁶

When Jonathan Swift wrote *Gullivers Travels* in 1726, his account of his “travelling box” constructed for Gulliver in Brobdingnag seems to demonstrate his familiarity with the furnishings of a middling bedroom in London.²⁷ Southey’s fictional travel accounts of Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella gave details of his lodgings in London. Whilst the Espriella letters may have been intended to deceive, the descriptions of the lodging interior are likely to be based on fact and relate to Southey’s experiences of London accommodation at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

it is on the second floor...my bed, though neither covered with silk nor satin, has as much ornament as is suitable; silk or satin would not give the clean appearance which the English always require...Hence, the damask curtains which were used in the last generation have given place to linen. These are full enough to hang in folds; by day they are gathered round the bed posts, which are light pillars of mahogany supporting a frame work, covered with the same furniture as the curtains; and valances are fastened around the frame, both within side the curtain and without, and again around the sides of the bedstead. The blankets are of the natural colour of wool, quite plain; the sheets plain also. I have never seen them flounced or laced, nor even seen a striped or coloured blanket. The counterpane is of all English manufactures the least tasteful; it is of white cotton, ornamented with cotton knots, in shape as graceless as the cut box in the garden. My window curtains are of the same pattern as the bed...²⁸

Vickery has set out the dividing line between what the eighteenth-century husband and the wife were responsible for acquiring and maintaining in the household and she makes clear that linen and other textiles were generally regarded as part of the woman’s domain.²⁹ This gender difference in knowledge of business, farm and household property was also noted by Norton in her study of the claims of loyalists to the British government after the American Revolution. She found that the majority of the 468 women applicants appeared to

²⁶ D. Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen’s Letters*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.40, also examples such as C. Williams, *Sophie in London 1786 being the Diary of Sophie v. la Roche*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933)

²⁷ Gulliver described the box as a “very convenient closet” which contained “a fine hammock, a handsome field bed” J. Swift, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon and Then a Captain of Several Ships*, I.vi., (London, 1726), p.109

²⁸ R. Southey, *Letters from England by Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella*, Vol. 1, Letter XIV, (London, 1807), pp.160-1

²⁹ Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009), pp.121-2

be insulated from family businesses and agricultural affairs leaving knowledge of property, stock and machinery to their male relations. Claims for losses within the household demonstrated the opposite; loyalist men were less able to provide complete lists of household goods or detailed descriptions of the missing objects while the women's lists were more complete and detailed.³⁰

A witness, frequently female, who was intimately connected to household goods, may help flesh out the sparse records of domestic objects and the most accurate and detailed lists of household goods are those that have been drawn up by the owners or, at least, family members or servants had a hand in the inventories. Given this personal involvement, they are more likely to contain consistent descriptions of the items. Household lists or inventories are valuable for the quantitative study of household objects, but the content can be very variable. Inventories connected with elite households tend to be more detailed and often occur as regular accounts of household property taken at periods which are not necessarily connected to the death of an owner.

Renovation of a property or a family relocation may justify such a record. In 1711, Elizabeth Freke left Billney, Norfolk to travel to London. Thinking that she would never return to her own home, she made an inventory of her household goods featuring a detailed list of a wide variety of bedcovers. These included a silk embroidered counterpane, which took six years to stitch, other counterpanes made from linen damask, calico, plaid and blue tartan, unused Indian silk quilt and plaid quilt and a calico quilt in her best bedchamber.³¹

Another source, which provides direct information about household items from the owners, can be found in the accounts of trials heard at the Old Bailey.³² The statements of the wronged prosecutors and the evidence given by witnesses add much detail to the spare text of the indictments. Owners resorted to description to ensure that stolen goods from the bedroom are recognised as their lawful property while witness statements frequently revolved around the bedroom where, often, items were stolen or where ill-gotten gains were hidden. The statements concerning the loss of bedroom textiles were frequently made by a female member of the owner family and, when the loss was from lodgings, the lodging keeper was often a woman who managed the rooms while her partner followed other employment. In

³⁰ M. B. Norton, 'American Women in Peace and War: The Case of the Loyalists', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, xxxiii, no. 3, (1976), pp.386-409

³¹ M. Carberry, ed., *Mrs Elizabeth Freke, Her Diary 1671-1714*, (Cork: Guy and Co., 1913), pp.111-18

³² *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey 1674-1913* available from: www.oldbaileyonline.org

particular, Styles used crime records to uncover the cloth used for plebeian bed sheets and bed hangings, within London lodgings.³³

Historians have emphasised the problems with using probate records as a method of revealing how an eighteenth-century person lived, farmed, worked, traded or furnished his home when they were actually created as a source of information about the value of a person's wealth and possessions.³⁴ Appraisers with some connection to the deceased such as creditors, relatives or neighbours were required to assess the value of the goods in lists that were lodged with the Church court before probate was granted. The Church courts required an inventory of a deceased's farm, trade and household goods together with any ready cash in order to determine whether there was sufficient money and saleable goods to settle debts before the remainder of the personal estate was passed to the heirs. The system was a way of protecting the interests of the creditors, executors and heirs as well as providing income to the Church through fees. However estates of the deceased elite with property and goods that were situated within more than one diocesan area were not usually appraised in the local archdeaconry courts.

The inventories were often incomplete lists of a deceased's possessions and their completeness and accuracy was dependent upon the appraisers' interpretation of their role as well as their thoroughness and judgement regarding the second-hand market value of items. The inventories cannot be complete documents that would allow a walk through a house and farm placing objects where they belong; they only provide a one-moment snapshot of a personal estate but, 'like all non-standard historical documents, they yield up their secrets reluctantly'.³⁵ The objects listed are rarely accompanied by descriptive terms and the quality and condition of the items listed usually can only be demonstrated by a lower or higher valuation. Orlin suggests that inventories are used too freely to making sweeping historical

³³ Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey', in Styles and Vickery, *Gender, Taste and Material Culture*, (2006), pp.61-80; J. Styles, 'What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution?' in G. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton textiles 1200-1850*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.307-26;

³⁴ The literature includes Spufford, 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', (1990), pp.139-74; T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose, eds., *Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000); L. C. Orlin, 'The Fiction of the Early Modern English Probate Inventory', in H. S. Turner, ed., *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England*, (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), pp.51-83

³⁵ T. Arkell, 'The Probate Process', in Arkell, Evans and Goose, *When Death Do Us Part*, (2000), p.12

claims and obtain material evidence of people's lives and her concerns must be taken into account before any results from the study of inventories are analysed.³⁶

The incomplete nature of some probate inventories can be demonstrated by those that relate to James Elam, a shoemaker of Ellington, Huntingdonshire who died in 1729 and his wife who died in the following year.³⁷ One appraiser, William Hawkins, was involved in both inventories. With the exception of the odd mole trap and linen wheel and the removal of one bedstead from the parlour to the chamber over the kitchen, the list of furniture and utensils in their house had changed little in a year. James Elam left more money and had a number of shop and agricultural items valued at over eleven pounds and ten shillings, but his total inventory was only seven pounds higher than his wife's. The value of her inventory relates to the inclusion of more goods such as linen and bedding and the raised value for all related furniture and household goods including a surprising £2.07.06 for 4 pairs of sheets, 6 pillow cases, 1 tablecloth and four napkins. It can be assumed that there was some attempt to either under-value James Elam's inventory or over-value his wife's.

John Corry, a dairyman from Kimbolton, Huntingdonshire died in 1775 and his wife, Ann, a year later. If the inventory of her household goods was taken in isolation, a great deal of information about her possessions and their value could be utilised as evidence of the life of a widow in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. However, John Corry's inventory of the previous year reveals an identical list of household possessions, with the exception of a missing warming pan and two round tables. All items in the house at Ann Corry's death are exactly half the value in his inventory and William Beetles, who was an appraiser in both cases, may well have used a copy of John Corry's inventory when preparing that of his wife.³⁸

Bedcovers at The Old Bailey Court

When John Tilbury and William Coleman were charged with a felony and brought to trial at the Old Bailey in September 1794, it was little expected that confusion over the precise definition of three stolen cotton bedcovers would lead to the end of the trial and the re-trial of the prisoners later the same day. Disagreement amongst the witnesses, who included the

³⁶ Orlin, 'The Fiction of the Early Modern Probate Inventory', (2000), p.52

³⁷ AH15-21, Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, probate inventories, James Elam 1729 and Widow Elam 1730

³⁸ AH15-21, Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, probate inventories, John Corry 1775 and Ann Corry 1776

housekeeper to the owner and an upholstery warehouseman, led to the use of different descriptions of the bedcovers including ‘cotton quilted counterpanes’, ‘quilted Marseilles counterpanes’ and ‘Marseilles bed quilts’.³⁹ Such confusion over household textiles illustrates the problems that can be encountered when using textual records to examine the material lives of people in the eighteenth century and highlights the difficulty that can be experienced when contemporary accounts show an inconsistent use of the descriptive terms.

Date	All Cases	Bed cover Cases	% Bedcover cases	Rugs	Quilts	Counterpanes	Coverlets	Bedcovers described as P/work
1680-1689	2685	18	0.67	16	7	3		
1690-1699	3380	22	0.65	10	17	1	2	
1700-1709	887	15	1.69	8	7	3		
1710-1719	3311	31	0.94	15	23		2	
1720-1729	5421	37	0.68	10	29	2	2	
1730-1739	5209	49	0.94	14	35	3	3	
1740-1749	4514	71	1.57	14	52	8	6	1
1750-1759	4390	77	1.75	17	49	11	7	
1760-1769	4667	74	1.59	12	48	19	11	
1770-1779	6564	133	2.03	17	83	40	6	1
1780-1789	8204	176	2.15	29	65	96	16	4
1790-1799	6170	171	2.77	19	56	95	124	13
1800-1809	7999	180	2.25	18	56	120	13	4
1810-1819	12521	275	2.2	47	104	149	17	
Total	75922	1329		246	631	550	209	28

Table 2.1 Old Bailey cases mentioning bedcovers, 1680-1819, by decade and type of bedcover with total number of cases heard, number of cases mentioning bedcovers and percentage of cases involving bedcovers. The column on the right includes bedcovers of every type which were described as made from ‘patchwork’.

For this research, records of all cases that were heard at the Old Bailey between 1680 and 1819, which mentioned named bedcovers, rug, quilt, counterpane or coverlet, were

³⁹ *Proceedings of the Old Bailey Online*, September 1794 trial of John Tilbury William Coleman (t17940917-23), Accessed: 10 January 2009

examined and numbers of bedcovers types recorded in periods of ten years (see table 2.1 above). The first mention of a bedcover name in the case record was taken as the preferred term although alternate terms that appear later in the case records were also noted. The text of the trial reports was used to extract detail such as descriptions of the bedcover including fibre and colour. The information was variable and in the early nineteenth century, fibre content was not provided for any bedcover description after about 1803. The detail extracted from these cases was then compared with contemporary definitions of bedcover names and used alongside other documentary sources to build a picture of the eighteenth-century view of such bed textiles.

Reports of trials heard at the Old Bailey Court were published regularly from 1678. *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey Online* offers transcripts of all surviving, printed *Proceedings*, but editions are missing for some court sessions between 1699 and 1714 and none survive from 1701, 1705 and 1706. There are fewer reports in the decade 1700 to 1709 as a result. In the earlier decades of this study, the *Proceedings* provided only brief summaries of the trials and did not offer comprehensive descriptions of the crime or the evidence given. As outlined in the Publishing History pages of *Old Bailey Online*, the publishers of the *Proceedings* gradually expanded the coverage of the trials, particularly after the 1730s and made greater use of the verbatim accounts of the trial participants. By the end of the century, the *Proceedings* were more an official publication and less a commercial venture providing more accurate reporting of each trial. It was expected that more details of the material form and value of bedcovers mentioned in trials would be available for the later period of the study, but as the following tables of results will show, the numbers of bedcovers with descriptions of fibre content were limited across the entire study period.

The valuation of stolen bedcovers was considered. It is widely accepted that the valuations used in court cases were manipulated, often to provide a monetary benchmark, which would later dictate the crime that would feature in the indictment.⁴⁰ There was often a difference between the valuation given in the indictment and that claimed by the prosecutor or witness. Where possible the valuation found in each decade for every bedcover type was recorded and the median valuation was extracted from all those cases available. The median valuation enabled the relative values of four bedcover types to be examined for every decade

⁴⁰ See the section on theft on the Crimes Tried at the Old Bailey page at *Proceedings of the Old Bailey Online*

of the period under consideration and provide an indication of which bedcovers were considered to have more monetary value and thus regarded more highly over time.

The median valuation for bedcovers in each decade had more relevance than the mean (average) valuation given the wide range of recorded valuations as seen in Table 2.2 below. The median values were more likely to give a commonly accepted figure for each bedcover, whereas average values were frequently skewed by the range of the values recorded.

Old Bailey: Rugs.

Johnson's two definitions for rug are 'A coarse nappy woollen cloth' and 'A coarse, nappy coverlet, used for mean beds' implying that the cloth was also the fabric used in the bed rug.⁴¹ John Nicol was assaulted by two highway men in 1724 and one was wearing a 'Rug Coat' which was probably made from this rug cloth and there are many other references to these coats in the Old Bailey trials during the first half of the century.⁴² Bailey defines rug as a 'shaggy coverlet for the bed' and Dyche as 'a warm Woollen Coverlid for a bed; also a shaggy sort of Great-Coat to wear in cold and wet Weather'. It appears to be generally accepted that an eighteenth-century bed rug is a thick, coarse-woollen covering with a pile or nap, which may provide more warmth than a blanket (see Fig. 38).⁴³

References to rugs in the Old Bailey Proceedings rarely provide descriptions, but 'woollen' is the only fibre type mentioned and blanket and rug were sometimes confused, such as 'I saw him cover'd with a Blanket or Rug' and 'covered over with a Blanket or Rug'.⁴⁴ The potential for confusion between a blanket and a rug was also illustrated in an entry in William Pollard's letterbook dated 28 Jan 1765. Pollard was a merchant in Philadelphia who imported goods, mainly textiles, from Britain and his letter to John Woolmer, merchant, Halifax, Yorkshire indicated that there were fine points of difference between the blankets and rugs he was importing from Britain;

Blankets and rugs. The blankets must be raised on both sides, but more on the right side than the wrong, let them be well covered if not so fine, and a rose at the four corners; the rugs must be raised in the inside, so as to cover the thread, and the tufts

⁴¹ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol II, (1755), p.540

⁴² *Proceedings of the Old Bailey Online*, July 1724, trial of James Harmen John Davis (t17240708-70) Accessed: 13 April 2011

⁴³ Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum*, (1730); Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, (1737); Steer, *Farm and Cottage Inventories*, (1969), p. 16

⁴⁴ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, December 1739 trial of Susannah Broom (t17391205-2), July 1741 trial of Elizabeth Eccles Richard Eades (t17410701-11), Accessed: 4 April 2011

set close if not so large, the [illegible] rugs seem as if they were milled after they came out of the loom. The tufts are close and the inside seems milled or raised so as to cover the thread entirely.⁴⁵

It has been suggested that caddow (cadow), which is described ‘as a coverlet or blanket, a rough woollen covering’, is a seventeenth-century synonym for rug.⁴⁶ Later in the eighteenth century, some Old Bailey cases involved hearth rugs or horse rugs and care was needed to ensure that entries in documents are actually bed rugs.

Seaman Allan described eighteenth-century American rugs as ‘manufactured in England...woven on a loom’, but suggested that they probably had a linen warp and a coarse wool weft drawn up in loops to create a shag.⁴⁷ In the mid-eighteenth century, ‘Bristol’ and ‘Torrington’ rugs from England were advertised in Virginia.⁴⁸ Jabez Maud Fisher, a Quaker, who travelled in Britain in the 1770s, describes finding merchants in Bristol who would be willing to ship ‘Pewter, Nails, Shot, Rugs, Blankets’ to his family’s wholesale business in Philadelphia.⁴⁹

The records of James and Mary Alexander, who were merchants in New York, document orders of textiles that were shipped from Britain including, in 1746, yardage of ‘Spotted rugs at 6/6’, ‘Green (rugs) at 14/-’ and ‘(rugs) at 16/-’.⁵⁰ However, by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century American bed rugs were of a different type. Homemade, they were stitched in decorative patterns using wool yarn on coarse linen or wool backing.

There also appears to have been a more superior version of the woollen shaggy rug. William Sharpe’s list of household items lost in the Derby Court fire in London in 1697 includes silk rugs as well as the more usual woollen rugs.⁵¹ Fisher also mentions Isaac Wilson

⁴⁵ Montgomery Collection, MS151, William Pollard letterbook, 1764-68, Columbia University Library, New York, USA; Thornton noted the same difficulty in telling the difference, Thornton, *Seventeenth Century Interior Decoration*, (1978), p.112

⁴⁶ R. Holme, *Academy of Armory; or A Storehouse of Armory and Blazon*, (1668), cited in F. M. Montgomery, *Textiles in America 1650-1870*, (New York: Norton and Co., 1984), p.183; Thornton, *Seventeenth Century Interior Decoration*, (1978), p.112

⁴⁷ G. Seaman Allan, ‘Bed Coverings: Kent County, Maryland, 1710-1820’, *Uncoverings*, 6, (1985), pp.16-7

⁴⁸ C. L. Stafford, and R. Bishop, *America’s Quilts and Coverlets*, (New York: Dutton and Co., 1972), p.17

⁴⁹ K. Morgan, ed., *The Travel Journals of Jabez Maud Fisher 1775-1779*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), Journal Q, List of Goods Vol.1

⁵⁰ Alexander Papers, New York Historical Society, New York 1746 cited in Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, (1984), p.336

⁵¹ Derby Court fire, claim of William Sharpe, WJ/SP/D/017, London Metropolitan Archives

Date	Cases	Rug Value		Quilt Value		Count/pane Value		Coverlet Value	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
1680-1689	18	8s	8s *	10s	25s	2s 6d	2s 6d *		
				64s 6d					
1690-1699	22	2s 6d	6s 3d	1s	21s	9s	9s *		
		10s	**	100s					
1700-1709	15			3s	20s	18s	18s *		
				100s					
1710-1719	31	2s	5s	4s	20s			6s	6s *
		15s		80s					
1720-1729	37	5s	5s 6d	2s	14s				
		12s		45s					
1730-1739	49	6d	1s 6d	2s	10s	2s	16s		
		5s		100s		30s			
1740-1749	71	1s	2s	6d	4s	1d	9s 1only	1s	2s
		4s		30s		30s		3s	
1750-1759	77	1s	1s 6d	4d	2s 9d	5s	25s	1s	2s
		5s		60s		40s		30s	
1760-1769	74	6d	6d	1s	5s	1s	4s 6d	6d	4s
		2s		40s		42s		6s	
1770-1779	133	6d	2s 6d	6d	3s	1s	9s 6d	1s	1s
		21s		80s		40s		3s	
1780-1789	176	6d	1s 4d	4d	3s	6d	8s	1s	2s
		5s		23s 6d		40s		200s	
1790-1799	171	1s	2s	6d	2s 9d	6d	5s	3d	4s
		13s		20s		60s		5s	
1800-1809	180	1s	2s	6d	5s	1s	10s	1s 6d	4s
		14s		90s		40s		20s	
1810-1819	275	1s	3s	1s	4s	1s	5s	1s	3s
		12s		40s		42s		12s	

Table 2.2 Highest and lowest values together with median values of bedcovers at the Old Bailey 1680-1819, by decade with total number of bedcover cases heard. Set in shillings (s) and pence (d) with larger valuations in pounds (£) converted to shillings for ease of comparison. There were 20 shillings in the pound. NB * Only 1 valuation available within the 10-year period ** Only 2 valuations available within the 10 year period

& Son of Kendal 'we have hitherto dealt with. A correspondence with them will always be very desirable. Their goods are. Silk Rugs Spotted and green from 8/6 to 18/-'.⁵²

Eighteenth-century inventory entries for rugs usually did not include a description, but when they do green examples appear to occur more often than other colours.⁵³ Four green rugs were listed in the Huntingdon inventories discussed later in the chapter, but no other colour was mentioned. A survey of two published lists of inventories from Essex and an area of Gloucestershire revealed that eleven green, eight red, one blue, one white and two yellow rugs were listed in the period covered by this paper.⁵⁴ Garrard noted that colour indication for rugs was rarely given in inventories, but with 'red and green seeming to be favourite' where it was identified (see Fig. 39).⁵⁵

Dyeing cloth green involved a two-stage process using indigo, a blue vat dye, and a mordanted yellow dye, which might suggest a higher cost for this colour rug. In a survey of domestic vessels from colonial American probate inventories, Beaudry tracked the 'marker terms' which were used to distinguish the objects in the lists and found that average items, which conformed to the normal expected size, shape, age, colour and construction, were taken for granted and did not require added description. Only the objects that were noticeably different from the norm were accompanied by a marker term.⁵⁶ It may be that green and silk rugs were singled out for mention because they were different and more valuable; the Alexander records indicated that green rugs were more than twice the cost of spotted ones.

However, the choice may have been led by fashion. When considering colour for heraldry, Holme (1688) associated specific colours with the planets. He tied green to Venus thus connecting it with the attributes of felicity and pleasure.⁵⁷ In an analysis of architectural colours in British interiors, Bristow described a late seventeenth and early eighteenth century taste for natural colours including the 'occasional use of the more expensive greens'.⁵⁸ Smith suggested that furnishings were most usually described as green in the previous two centuries

⁵² Morgan, *The Travel Journals of Jabez Maud Fisher*, (1992), Journal Q, List of Goods Vol. 1

⁵³ Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, (1984), p.335, Fig. D-88 illustrates a fragment of tufted green wool rug

⁵⁴ Steer, *Farm and Cottage Inventories*, (1969),; Moore, *The Goods and Chattels*, (1976)

⁵⁵ Garrard. 'English Probate Inventories', (1980), p.63

⁵⁶ M. C. Beaudry, 'Words for Things: Linguistic Analysis of Probate Inventories', in M. C. Beaudry, ed., *New Directions in Archaeology; Documentary Archaeology in the New World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp.43-50

⁵⁷ Holme, *The Academy of Armory*, (1688) cited in I. C. Bristow, *Architectural Colours in British Architecture 1615-1840*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), p.12; taking this further, Vickery speculated whether this association made it particularly suitable for bedrooms see Vickery *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009), p.174

⁵⁸ Bristow, *Architectural Colours*, (1996), pp.48-9

and relates this to the elite taste for representations of landscape, vegetation and even the cosmos in art and decoration.⁵⁹

Mitchell in his examination of textiles used in bed and wall hangings by the ‘middling sort’ in London, noted that green was the most popular colour for bed hangings from 1660 to 1690 to be overtaken only by blue in the period 1690 to 1735. His study of inventories of City freeman showed that the preference for green was particularly strong in the less wealthy households whereas red and blue grew in popularity in houses with rooms valued at more than twenty pounds.⁶⁰

An analysis of values for rugs cited in trials at the Old Bailey (see Table 2.2 above) did not show meaningful results before 1710. Despite the occasional occurrence of some individual high values, the median value of rugs is low after that date. With the exception of coverlet values in the period 1770-1779, the median value of rugs is the lowest of the four main bedcover types from 1710 to the end of the period studied.

Old Bailey: Hillings.

Hilling does not appear in Johnson’s dictionary, but hillings have been defined as ‘coverings mainly applied to beds’ by Milward and bed quilts or covers by Trinder and Cox.⁶¹ The entry for hilling in the University of Wolverhampton’s Dictionary Project defines the most common meaning for the term as ‘a covering for a BED... which virtually disappeared after 1700’ and, through entries in probate inventories where hillings occur as ‘hillings or counterpanes’, the entry suggests that the two terms may be confused. Hillings often occur alongside blankets and coverlets however, thus implying that these two terms are not alternative definitions. According to the entry, almost all examples of hillings are from the Midlands and since no references have been found in newspaper advertisements or trade cards, they are not likely to be fashionable bedcovers.⁶² Hillings were not mentioned in any Old Bailey cases.

Old Bailey: Quilts.

Dr Johnson’s description of a quilt is quite clear ‘a cover made by stitching one cloth over

⁵⁹ B. R. Smith, , *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)

⁶⁰ Mitchell, “My purple will be too sad for that melancholy room”, *Textile History*

⁶¹ R. Milward, *A Glossary of Household, Farming and Trade Terms from Probate Inventories*, (Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society, 1986), p.30; Trinder and Cox, *Yeomen and Colliers in Telford*, (1980), p.463

⁶² Dictionary Project, University of Wolverhampton, Dr. N.C. Cox, personal communication: 14 September 2010

another with some soft substance between them' (see Fig. 40). If his meaning was commonly accepted at this time, it is likely that quilts were easily recognised when they appeared in households before 1755. Quilts were mentioned regularly during the period of study of Old Bailey trials and were the most valuable bedcover type until the 1730s (see value table 2.2 above and quilt table 2.3 below). Many would have been British, either produced in professional workshops or stitched at home. However in the earlier records of Old Bailey trials, the listed quilts were mainly cotton and may have been valuable imports from India. These included a calico quilt lined with silk, value forty shillings, that was stolen in 1695 and an Indian quilt, value five pounds, that was stolen from Thomas, Earl of Westmorland in 1709.⁶³

Date	No. Quilt Cases	Quilts	Cotton	Linen	Linen mix	Wool	Silk	Patchwork	Other
1680-1689	5	7	3				2		
1690-1699	13	17	6	1			2		
1700-1719	7	7	3	1					1
1710-1719	21	23	8						
1720-1729	25	29	2				1		
1730-1739	31	35	2	3			1		1
1740-1749	44	52	3	12		1		1	
1750-1759	48	49	3	9	1		2		
1760-1769	36	48	2	9	1		2		
1770-1779	79	83	9	30	2	4	1	1	
1780-1789	53	65	7	13	2	4			
1790-1799	52	56	9	5		1		8	
1800-1809	52	56	2					2	1
1810-1819	94	104						1	
Total	560	631	59	83	6	10	11	13	3

Table 2.3 Number of Quilts stolen or mentioned in evidence at the Old Bailey 1680-1819, by decade together with total number of cases heard that mention quilts and descriptive fabric type .

⁶³ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, May 1695 trial of George Manning (t16950508-26), December 1709 trial of Thomas Smith, Mary Mason (t17091207-41), Accessed: 15 May 2011

Lemire suggests that, by the later seventeenth century, cotton calico quilts were commonplace, at least in Southern England, and were shipped by the thousands from India. Over 3100 quilts were imported into London from 1697 and 1699 together with ‘many thousands of yards of quilted calico’ that could be made into quilts at the entry port.⁶⁴ It would be likely that some merchants would prefer to import lengths of cloth rather than bulkier quilts allowing local craft workers to use them to quilt bedcovers as well as making up quilts from Indian quilted cloth. It would appear that, by the early eighteenth century, European printers also printed quilt tops in imitation of the Indian calicos.

During the second decade of the eighteenth century there was a strong campaign by supporters of the woollen and silk manufacturers to ban printed cloths. This culminated in an Act in 1720 to prohibit ‘...the Use and Wear of all printed, painted, stained, or dyed Callicoes, in Apparel, Houshold-Stuff, Furniture, or otherwise’ after 25th December 1722.⁶⁵ Those campaigning for exemption from the prohibition included upholders and quilt makers who petitioned the House of Lords at the time of the passage of the Act for a clause to be inserted into the bill ‘to preserve the making, use and wear of quilts made of printed, painted, stained or dyed callicoe which shall be so done in Great Brittaine’.⁶⁶ Two broadsheets *The Case of the Makers of Quilts for Beds only* and *The Case of the Quilt Makers* are likely to have been part of the same campaign.⁶⁷ *The Case of the Quilt Makers* makes it clear that white Indian calico was printed in Britain after importation. The calico was printed with square designs for bedcovers called ‘Callicoe Carpets’ and, it was claimed, they were not suitable for other uses (see Fig. 41).

The result of the prohibition was a rush to order calico furnishings and to recycle printed cotton gowns into bedcovers before the ban was introduced in late 1722. Thomas Nash advertised in 1722 that ‘his is to inform those that have Occasion for Beds of the finest Chintz Patterns, Calico Quilts, Carpets to Cover one Side of Calico Gowns, to make into Quilts, may be furnished all sorts, by Tho. Nash at the Royal Bed in Holborn-Bridge’.⁶⁸ Catherine Hutton describes a quilt that her Aunt Perkins gave her, which made such use of a

⁶⁴ Lemire, *The British Cotton Trade*, Part II, (2010), p.229

⁶⁵ 7 Geo.I, c.7. (1720)

⁶⁶ Upholders and Quilt Makers of London 21 February 1721 HL/PO/JO/10/3/212/32, Parliamentary Archives, cited in Lemire, *The British Cotton Trade*, Part II, (2010), p.53

⁶⁷ *The Case of the Makers of Quilts for Beds only* is cited in D. Osler, *Traditional British Quilts*, (London: Batsford, 1987), p.88

⁶⁸ *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post* (London), 24 November 1722 cited in Lemire, *The British Cotton Trade*, Part II, (2010), p.309

recycled dress and petticoat ‘The outside of this bed quilt was a dress called a suit of clothes worn by Anne Hutton my grandmother about 1715. I believe it to be an Indian Chintz’ (see Fig. 42).⁶⁹

The difference between the imported Indian quilts and their European counterparts would have been seen in the chosen fillings and backing cloths. Cotton wadding and cotton backs would be found in Indian quilts whereas the British-made versions appeared to make use of fillings of ‘ordinary Wool, which must otherwise be thrown away, being too short for Spinning, and fit for no other Use’ and yards of woollen ‘Kidderminster or Kendal Stuffs us’d for the wrong Sides of Quilts’ for backings.⁷⁰ Dyche’s dictionary definition of a quilt specifies this British type with a woollen filling ‘...commonly made of various Sorts of Stuffs with Wool between the two Coverings’.⁷¹

The Upholders and Quilt Makers’ petition and the broadsheets highlighted the light and warm features of the cotton quilts when compared with ‘cold and heavy’ linen cloths and woollens that ‘harbour Filth and Dirt, as the Rugs used to do’. They suggested that the attraction of quilts was because they could be easily washed, but those with wool fillings and backings would have been as difficult to launder as a woollen blanket or rug (Fig. 43).

After the middle of the century, the definition of quilt may be less clear. Concerns had been expressed about the threat to British textile manufacturers by the import of fine cotton, stuffed and corded quilts from Marseille on the French Mediterranean coast and the subsequent loss of trade for British quiltmakers.⁷² The Society for the encouragement of the Arts, Manufactures and Commerce offered a premium (award) for imitating Marseilles quilting in the loom. The prize was awarded to Robert Elsdon ‘first Inventor and Publisher of Gentlemens Waistcoats, Lady’s Petticoats Counterpanes &c work’d in a loom’ in 1745 although another premium was offered to John Bolland who submitted to the Society a ‘Specimen sent of English wove Quilting in Imitation of the French’ in 1760. The Society minutes record that, over the next few years, premiums of up to fifty pounds each were

⁶⁹ HED 3649, British Quilt Heritage Project papers, The Quilt Museum and Gallery, York

⁷⁰ See *The Case of the Quiltmakers* Fig. 41

⁷¹ Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, (1737)

⁷² For details of the growth of the Marseille quiltmaking industry see K. Berenson, *Quilts of Provence: The Art and Craft of French Quiltmaking*, (New York: Archetype Press, 1996); K. Berenson, *Marseille: The Cradle of White Corded Quilting*, (Lincoln, Nebraska: International Quilt Study Center and Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, (2010)

awarded to inventors who presented sixty yards of fabric woven in an improved version of the woven quilting technique.⁷³

Woven quilting, often called marseilles or marcella, was a double cloth with a heavy corded weft between the layers which provides the padding. During his extensive trips around Britain, the Quaker Jabez Maud Fisher visited Manchester in 1776. He was impressed by the expanding manufacturing activity in the town and the inventive, entrepreneurial spirit of its industrialists and noted the quilting saying:

With respect to the particulars of their manufacturies they are too numerous to mention....And among the most perfect of her Inventions is the mode of weaving the Quilted Coverlids and Petticoats. These are ornamented with Flowers of every sort and of various Colours; some too are done in silk. The Loom for this is upon the same principles of the common kind, but several Shuttles are used instead of one, and there is great complication and trouble in adjusting the warp as there is care in conducting the work afterwards.⁷⁴

The woven quilting was sold as bedcovers and by the yard and proved to be an attractive, practical alternative to the traditional three-layer, hand-sewn quilt whilst often, confusingly, still being described as a quilt (see Fig. 44). Fisher found that Gideon Bickerdike, also a Friend, could supply 'quiltings' for his family business from five shillings three pence to six shillings three pence, but it is unclear whether the price refers to yardage.⁷⁵

In the middle of the century from 1740 to 1769, linen quilts, not cotton, were mentioned most often in Old Bailey cases at a time when the median value of quilts dropped from over ten shillings to five shillings and under (see tables 2.2 and 2.3 above). If these quilts were stitched from printed linen, their prominence may be a carryover from the restrictions on printed cottons of the 1720 Act reducing the purchase of pure cotton for quilt tops. However, it is also possible that these were cheaply-produced, hand-quilted covers made in plain linen to compete with the new, woven cotton quilts.

It seems very likely that the interpretation of the term quilt becomes increasingly unreliable towards the end of the eighteenth century. The Tilbury and Coleman case of 1794,

⁷³ C. Rose, 'The Manufacture and Sale of 'Marseilles' Quilting in Eighteenth Century London', *Bulletin of Centre International d'Étude des Textiles Anciens*, lxxvi, (1999), p.109

⁷⁴ Morgan, *The Travel Journals of Jabez Maud Fisher*, (1992), p.236

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.236

cited above, indicates that coverlet and counterpane could well have been used for the hand stitched or woven quilted bedcovers as much as quilt. The terms counterpane and quilt were used for the same object in seventeen Old Bailey cases after 1793. One London householder giving evidence said she ‘missed a white counterpane, or a bed quilt’.⁷⁶ In a similar way, Miss Hutton (1756-1846) looking back on her life said that ‘I have quilted counterpanes and chest covers in fine white linen, in various patterns of my own invention.’⁷⁷ This confusion would have implications for the interpretation of records in inventories listing quilts where no description is included and proves troublesome when attempting to confirm Lemire’s suggestion that ‘the cotton quilt became part of the material lexicon of English homes’.⁷⁸

Old Bailey: Counterpanes.

Johnson wrote that a counterpane was a type of coverlet ‘A coverlet for a bed, or anything else woven in squares. It is sometimes written, according to etymology, counterpoint’. Quite how this description applies after 1755 is not clear.⁷⁹ A modern glossary accompanying an edited collection of eighteenth-century inventories from elite households describes a counterpane as ‘An elaborately decorated bed cover, usually trimmed or decorated with applied trimmings. Often shaped to fit around the posts at the foot end and over the bolsters at the head’.⁸⁰ This description of a bespoke, tailored bedcover does appear to relate to the kind of counterpanes recorded at Montagu House, London in 1709, including ‘a Spriged Sattin Counter=point, a Grey Silk counterpoint and a Grey flannel counter poynt’ and also in Elizabeth Freke’s house in Norfolk in 1711.⁸¹ However, the record of counterpanes that featured in cases at the Old Bailey does not confirm Johnson’s or the more recent definition. (see table 2.4 below).

The numbers of counterpanes occurring in cases before 1740 are low. After this date they occur more regularly and the median value is consistently the highest of all the four bedcover types. (see value table 2.2 above). The fibre content is rarely luxurious silk, however, and there are few references to high-status counterpanes although a white satin

⁷⁶ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, November 1794 trial of Elizabeth and Alice Buller (t17941111-21) Accessed: 19 April 2011

⁷⁷ Mrs. C. H. Beale, ed. *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman of the Last Century: Letters of Catherine Hutton*, (Birmingham: Cornish Bros., 1891), p.213

⁷⁸ Lemire, *The British Cotton Trade*, (2010), p.229

⁷⁹ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 1, (1755), p.426

⁸⁰ T. Murdoch, ed., *Noble Households: Eighteenth Century Inventories of Great English Houses. A Tribute to John Cornforth*, (Cambridge: John Adamson, 2006), p.289

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.17; Carberry, *Mrs Elizabeth Freke*, (1913), pp.111-13

Date	No. C/ntpane Cases	Counterpane	Cotton	Linen	Cotton mix	Silk/satin	Patchwork	Other
1680-1689	3	3						
1690-1699	1	1	1					
1700-1709	3	3	2					1
1710-1719								
1720-1729	2	2						
1730-1739	3	3		1				
1740-1749	8	8	2	2		1		1
1750-1759	10	11	2	2				3
1760-1769	18	19	6	5		1		
1770-1779	41	40	24	10	1	1		
1780-1789	86	96	58	5		3	4	
1790-1799	82	95	63	9	1	1	3	
1800-1809	103	120	12				2	
1810-1819	136	149					3	
Total	496	550	170	34	2	7	12	5

Table 2.4 Number of Counterpanes stolen or used in evidence at the Old Bailey 1680-1819, by decade together with total number of cases heard that mention counterpanes and descriptive fabric type.

counterpane embroidered with gold and silver flowers and valued at thirty pounds was stolen from Hon Nicholas Herbert in 1775.⁸²

Wadsworth and Mann cite entries from the letters of Henry Escricke of Bolton written between 1738 and 1741.⁸³ Escricke acted as a middleman between raw cotton and linen warp suppliers and the dealers and fustian weavers around Bolton. In 1738 he wrote to his regular London clients, Wilson and Harrop, that ‘I could get your Counterpanes made as good as you please and your names wove in it or what else you please. I have sent you one as good as any is made unless they are bespoke’. An undated letter written by Escricke to a Mr

⁸² *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, February 1775 trial of James Wright (t17750218-74) Accessed: 19 April 2011

⁸³ A. P. Wadsworth, and J. Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Manchester 1600-1780*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931), pp.261-73

Pearson of London refers to the sale of Pearson's raw cotton and describes buying twelve counterpanes for twelve pounds from Joseph Andrews, a weaver who used cotton and three bought from Law of 'Carlile' for two pounds and five shillings.⁸⁴ These suggest that fustian or cotton woven bedcovers supplied by Bolton weavers in the 1740s were being termed counterpanes and they could be made in standard or custom-made designs. However, only four of the eight counterpanes recorded as being stolen in the period 1740 to 1749 were described as cotton or linen and the median value of Old Bailey counterpanes at this period was slightly lower than that recorded for Andrews's and Law's.

The town of Bolton has long been associated with hand-woven bedcovers. The Bolton covers were woven on extra-wide hand looms and were distinguished by a raised weft-loop texture which could be used to create surface patterns or even names as described by Escricke. Often misidentified in the past as products of power looms with an American provenance, Burnham recognised that the bedcovers, called quilts, counterpanes or caddows, were hand-woven, cotton textiles made in and around the Lancashire town.⁸⁵ More recent research has revealed that the Bolton counterpane industry flourished during the second half of the eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth century meeting a domestic and American demand for white cotton bedcovers and despite the growing influence of the power loom, Bolton hand weavers continued to operate profitably (see Fig. 45).⁸⁶

Sophie von la Roche visited England and lodged in Marylebone in 1785. On the way to London, she stayed at an inn in Ingatestone, Essex. She liked the bedcovers in her room, which she described as being 'of a white cotton material with fringe decoration woven in. Everything we had was spotlessly white'.⁸⁷ It is very possible that they were Bolton counterpanes. The description in Southey's spoof of 1807 of the bedcover as a white cotton counterpane decorated with cotton knots is suggestive of the same type.⁸⁸

A large number of the counterpanes that were cited in Old Bailey cases after 1770 were described as 'white' or 'cotton'. Lydia Duncan giving evidence in a case concerning the theft of a blue and white curtain said 'I took it to be a counterpane, as the curtain was lined

⁸⁴ Ibid., p.266, p.271

⁸⁵ Montgomery, *Textiles in America*, (1984), p.172, p.183; H. Burnham, 'Bolton "Quilts" or "Caddows": A Nineteenth Century Cottage Industry', *CIETA Bulletin*, xxxiv, no. 2, (1971), pp.22-8

⁸⁶ E. Beeston, and L. Horton, 'Bolton's Cotton Counterpanes: Hand-Weaving in the Industrial Age', *Quilt Studies*, 14, (2013), pp.7-36

⁸⁷ Williams, *Sophie in London*, (1933), p.84

⁸⁸ Southey, *Letters from England*, Vol. 1, (1807), p.160-1

with white, and it was the wrong side out'.⁸⁹ Evidence provides some indication that many of these counterpanes may have been either woven quilted or hand-woven, weft-loop covers. Victims of theft claimed the bedcover was 'a very large counterpane, the largest size there is', also another 'I do not know it by the counterpane, but by the paper: there was a mark of the prime cost in letters, and also there was a small mark signifying the size of the counterpane....I had an eight quarter [this was probably 72 inches] counterpane standing in my house, when I went out'.⁹⁰ A shopkeeper said 'there were three cotton counterpanes, which I can only swear to the manufacturer's mark, because they had a policy to take off our paper which had the shop mark on'.⁹¹ A clerk to an upholsterer who had supplied counterpanes to a victim of a robbery said 'I went to see if I should know it again, as far as I know, it agrees with the size and pattern'.⁹²

Counterpanes in Old Bailey records in the early nineteenth century do not have the fibre type attached to many examples. Notably the only description assigned to an Old Bailey counterpane after 1803 was patchwork.

Old Bailey: Coverlets.

Johnson defined a coverlet as 'The outermost of the bedcloaths; that under which all the rest are concealed' suggesting that he felt a coverlet could be a variable type of bedcover.⁹³ It may be that coverlet is a catch-all term to be used when it is uncertain what the bed cover is. A survey of the term coverlet used in cases that were tried at the Old Bailey between 1680 and 1819 also suggests that it was a loose term for a bedcover which was made from a variety of cloths, but not silk. From 1750 towards the end of the century, the main descriptions were 'woollen' or 'worsted', but cotton becomes a more popular fibre in the last decade of the century (see coverlet table 2.5 above). The number of coverlets for the period 1790 to 1799 was increased substantially by a case concerning the theft of one hundred and one coverlets from the Tower of London, which were also described as woollen blankets, but over the entire study period, coverlets appeared in fewer cases compared with the cases listing the

⁸⁹ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, April 1786 trial of John Conyers (t17860426-110) Accessed: 19 April 2011

⁹⁰ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, February 1783 trial of Mary Shepherd (t17830226-62), December 1788 trial of Moses Harris and Jacob Solomon (t17881210-16), accessed: 19 April 2011; Units of measurement for textiles related to the ell as well as the yard and included a nail which was equivalent to 2¼ inches, two nails 4½ inches and a quarter which was 4 nails or 9 inches.

⁹¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1793 trial of John Maxey, Judith Curran (t17930911-66), accessed: 19 April 2011

⁹² *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, April 1795 trial of Susanna Gardiner (t17950416-24), accessed: 19 April 2011

⁹³ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 1 (1755), p.421

Date	No. Coverlet Cases	Coverlets	Cotton	Linen	Woolen	Worsted	Patchwork	Other
1680-1689								
1690-1699	1	2						
1700-1709								
1710-1719	2	2				1		
1720-1729	2	2						1
1730-1739	3	3						
1740-1749	6	6	1					
1750-1759	7	7	1		3	1		
1760-1769	11	11	1	1	3	1		
1770-1779	5	6			1	1		
1780-1789	15	16		2	1			1
1790-1799	23	124	11	3	104		2	
1800-1809	13	13						
1810-1819	17	17					1	
Total	105	209	14	6	112	4	3	2

Table 2.5 Number of Coverlets stolen or used in evidence at the Old Bailey 1680-1819, by decade together with total number of cases heard that mention coverlets and descriptive fabric type.

other three bed cover types.⁹⁴ The value of a coverlet appears only once before 1740 and, after that date, the values are generally low. The values only increase at the end of the century and into the first part of the nineteenth century; the value of ten pounds for an India coverlet in 1786 stands out as exceptional (see value table 2.2 above).⁹⁵

Old Bailey Bedcovers: evaluation.

Comparison of the number of the four main bedcover types in cases at the Old Bailey 1680 to 1819 (see table 2.1 above) demonstrates changes in bedcovers use over the period. Coverlets and counterpanes were rarely cited at the end of the seventeenth century and the beginning of

⁹⁴ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, November 1796 trial of James Wilson (t17961130-42), accessed: 15 April 2011

⁹⁵ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, May 1786 trial of Dorothy Hargrave (t17860531-53), accessed: 15 April 2011

the eighteenth century and coverlets continued to be under-reported despite the distortion by the Tower of London case in the period 1790 to 1799. However the remarkable growth in the use of counterpanes should be noted. This may indicate a developing taste for woven cotton bedcovers such as Marcella quilts and weft loop covers, but this is difficult to confirm into the nineteenth century since no fibre types were attached to any of the bedcovers after 1803.

Patchwork was used as a descriptive term for thirteen quilts, three coverlets and twelve counterpanes. With the exception of a 'cloth patchwork quilt' stolen in 1741, all the examples occur after 1770.

It would seem that the records reveal a mobility of some of the terms and the use of certain standard bedcover names actually masked changes in definition. Rug appears to have been employed consistently for shaggy wool coverings and had the lowest monetary valuation of the four main bedcover types. While quilt was used throughout the period to describe a three-layer, wadded cover, it was also employed for woven covers that were made to ape the look of the Marseille corded quilt. Counterpanes appear to move from bespoke covers, tailored to fit high-status beds, to hand-woven cotton bedcovers while still retaining the highest median valuations of all the four bedcovers that were mentioned in Old Bailey cases. The term coverlet was used to describe bedcovers that were made from a variety of fibres, but coverlet seems to be under-used in the Old Bailey records and its valuation remains relatively low.

The conclusions from the study of a large number of Old Bailey trials make an interesting comparison with a small group of claims that were lodged with London quarter sessions following two fires in Westminster at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. City authorities had a constant fear of the destructive powers of fire and took measures to avoid outbreaks in the narrow streets amongst the many timber framed houses that still made up much of the metropolis, but despite this fires were common occurrence.

A fire in Derby Court in Channell Row, Westminster in 1697 took hold destroying houses in the court as well as the surrounding area. Householders and tenants who lost property in the blaze or when their untouched houses were blown up to stop the fire spreading, made a petition for relief enclosing inventories of their losses in order to prove

Derby Court, London Fire 1697 Householdors' and Tenants' Claims						
Name	Total Claim	Status	Rug	Quilt	Countpane	Coverlet
William Sharpe	£50.00.00	Gent?	4	1		
Katherine Fox	£9.13.00	Lodger	1			
Anna Dayston	£51.19.06	Widow	1	2	1	
Jane Cole	£556.13.06	Widow		2		
Total			6	5	1	0
Charles Street, London Fire 1707 Householdors' and Tenants' Claims						
Name	Total Claim	Status	Rug	Quilt	Countpane	Coverlet
Ann Smith	£9.00.02			1		
Hugh Patten	£12.00.00		2			
Eleanor Edwards	£3.16.00			1		
Abigail Jefferys	£43.10.00	Shopkeeper?	1			
Vere Mellichamp	£244.00.00		1	1		
William Roberts	£32.12.00		2			
Thomas Parrin	£115.00.00			1		1
John Ffinkell	£390.12.00	Woodsmen	3	2		
William Windsor	£52.02.00		1	1		
Edward Ingleton	£329.00.06			7		
Matilda Ross	£35.10.00			1		
Susanna Child	£20.00.00	Widow		2		
William Dalton	£15.12.07			1		
Andrew Emonstorone	£15.00.00		1			
Jane Short	£328.05.00	Widow	1	1	1	
John Thornburgh	£150.07.07		1	1	1	
Sarah Dingley	£300.02.06	Widow	4	9	4	
Total			17	29	6	1

Table 2.6 Number of Bedcovers listed in claims for loss in fires in Westminster, London 1697 and 1707 together with total value of each claim.

their case.⁹⁶ Twenty years later a fire started in John Ffinkell's house or wood yard spreading through adjacent courts and along Charles Street, Westminster. Again over fifty house owners and tenants turned to their local quarter sessions for financial assistance.⁹⁷

Four Derby Court and seventeen Charles Street householders claimed for the loss of sixty five bedcovers (see table 2.6 above). A low number of coverlets and counterpanes were noted in the early period of the Old Bailey trials. Two coverlets and one counterpane were named in Old Bailey cases between 1690 and 1699 and no coverlets and three counterpanes

⁹⁶ Derby Court fire claim 1697, WJ/SP/D/015-071, London Metropolitan Archives

⁹⁷ Charles Street fire claim 1707, WJ/SP/D/072-136, London Metropolitan Archives

were named between 1700 and 1709. A similar small number were listed in the fire claims; only one was described as a coverlet and seven were counterpanes. The counterpanes lost in the Charles Street fire belonged to owners who made higher than average claims for lost property and included two widows whose claims were over three hundred pounds each.

More than half the bedcovers lost in the 1707 Charles Street fire were quilts. This was far higher than the number mentioned at the Old Bailey in the period 1700 to 1709 where only seven out of eighteen bedcovers were named as quilts. One of the two quilts lost by the materially-wealthy Jane Cole in the Derby Court fire was described as a patchwork quilt. The presence of more quilts in the fire claims suggests that residents in the Westminster area may have been better able to afford more valuable bedcovers than residents of London in general.

Beds and Bedcovers in Probate Inventories in Huntingdonshire

The results of the study of bedcovers stolen in metropolitan London, where many houses were in multi-occupancy and large sections of the population lived in lodgings where furnishings were under the control of landlords, can be compared with data extracted from the largely rural county of Huntingdonshire. In this section, more than three hundred and seventy Huntingdonshire probate inventories from 1680 to 1819 that listed named bedcovers were examined.⁹⁸ Specific data regarding all beds and types of bedcover in households was recorded whenever a named bedcover was mentioned in an inventory. Other inventories in the county listed only general bed and beddings and were excluded from the study. The number of probate inventories where more than one bedcover type was named, were also recorded.

This bed and bedcover study follows Sneath who, in the second largest study of consumption using probate records, examined 2949 probate inventories and over 400 probate accounts in Yorkshire and Huntingdonshire.⁹⁹ His work is the first large-scale study of the records from the county using all seventeenth and eighteenth-century probate records in twenty Huntingdon parishes, both rural and urban, as well as extracting the details from all the deceased described as labourers in the county. He agreed with Overton that changes in patterns of consumption and the growth of consumerism began in metropolitan London and the wealthy south-east of England in the later seventeenth century and the growth spread

⁹⁸ Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon 1585-1858, AH15-21, Huntingdon Archives and Local Studies, Huntingdon

⁹⁹ K. Sneath, *Consumption, Wealth, Indebtedness and Social Structure in Early Modern England*, unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, (2008)

slowly out to and across the rest of the country. He deliberately focused on agricultural and household items that had been discussed in previous texts in order to provide comparable data and only considered beds and sheets from bedchambers.

Whilst Sneath's study was a broad-based extraction of all information available in order to build a picture of social standing, personal wealth, possessions and consumption, the aim of this study was to achieve a better appreciation of the use of beds and bedcovers in a small agricultural county. The data relating to specific bedcover types are compared with that extracted from Old Bailey trials earlier in the chapter. In relation to the main research title of *Anonymous Needlework*, it was hoped that some references to patchwork would also be found.

In the long eighteenth-century, Huntingdon was a rural county with a number of small towns including Huntingdon and Godmanchester on Ermine Street, the road running north from London, and St Ives and Ramsey, both inland ports on the Great Ouse. At the beginning of the period, it was considered to be part of the south-eastern triangle containing the most prosperous and densely populated counties in England, but it was small when compared with its wealthier, larger neighbours such as Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire and with no large urban community. Sneath estimated that the population of the county in 1674 was over 28,000.¹⁰⁰ Wrigley calculated that the population of the county was 35,186 in 1761, which was the second smallest county population in the south-east and this rose marginally to 39,316 at the time of the first census in 1801. This slow rate of population growth over forty years is lower than all other English counties apart from Wiltshire, Hertfordshire, Rutland and Northamptonshire.¹⁰¹

Valuations for individual articles connected with bed and bedding were not recorded very often in the Huntingdonshire inventories and the small number of returns was not sufficient to provide reliable average values. Problems regarding the accuracy of valuations of items listed in inventories have been considered by Overton and by Cox and Cox although the examples used for comparison with contemporary market prices were, in the main, shop

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.153

¹⁰¹ T. Wrigley, *English County Populations in the Later Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Department of Geography, University of Cambridge, (undated) <http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/abstracts/paper9.pdf> accessed: 22 November 2010

stock, farm crops and cattle.¹⁰² Cox and Cox proposed that the valuations of shop goods and farm stock were consistent with market prices and the valuations and prices fluctuated up and down during the period in very similar patterns. However the variable qualities of the textile commodities they considered meant that the comparison of valuations and market prices for fustian, buckram and narrow woollen cloth was not completely satisfactory. It is possible that knowledgeable appraisers, such as fellow tradesmen, were comfortable with compiling lists of trade and farm equipment, crops and stock and attributing reliable values to them. Yet, at the same time, they may have struggled to recognise all the varied pieces of household equipment and domestic textiles and, given the varying quality of the textiles, may have been unable to provide accurate valuations. It would appear likely that women's knowledge was missing from the majority of these inventories.

Huntingdonshire: Types of Beds and Bedcovers

The survey of Huntingdon probate inventories that listed bed coverings, together with beds, contained three hundred and seventy four records. Many beds were described as 'old' but it was assumed that they were still beds in use, wherever they were found, and therefore the description was only part of an attempt at a reduced valuation. The non-standard nature of these documents is revealed when the term 'bed' and 'bedstead' is used either to describe the same thing or to define the wooden bed structure and the 'mattress' separately. 'Bed' was only included when it was clear that it did not relate to a mattress-type bed that was filled with down, feathers, flock or chaff (straw).

The sample varies across the period according to the surviving number of inventories that listed named bedcovers. In order to obtain an effective comparison of results across the period, the target number for each five-year period was set at twenty inventories. This was far easier to achieve in the early period when more inventories survived. The compromise reached was that the total number of beds and named bedcovers in each period set out in the table 2.7 (see below) covered twenty records for every five year period from 1680 to 1749 with the exception of 1695-1699 where only nineteen relevant records were found and 1730-1734 with only fifteen records. From 1750 to 1779, the records come from ten-year periods and later in the century when fewer inventories have survived (or were actually taken), the period was twenty years.

¹⁰² M. Overton, 'Prices from Probate Inventories' in Arkell, Evans and Goose, *Understanding and Interpreting Probate Inventories*, (2000); N. C. Cox, and J. J. Cox, 'Valuations in Probate Inventories', *The Local Historian*, 16, (1985), pp.467-77 and 17 (1986), pp.85-100

Date	No. of inv.	No. of Beds	No. of Bedcovers	Different Bedcover types
1680-1684	20	61	36	2
1685-1689	20	62	27	2
1690-1694	20	77	47	7
1695-1699	19	71	29	2
1700-1704	20	106	63	8
1705-1709	20	78	38	6
1710-1714	20	128	101	9
1715-1719	20	78	39	6
1720-1724	20	71	46	8
1725-1729	20	55	39	6
1730-1734	15	53	33	5
1735-1739	20	64	42	6
1740-1744	20	94	67	8
1745-1749	20	66	41	5
<i>1750-1759</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>117</i>	<i>102</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>1760-1769</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>107</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>1770-1779</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>94</i>	<i>77</i>	<i>8</i>
1780-1799	20	90	83	9
1799-1819	20	87	93	14
Total	374	1559	1093	135

Table 2.7 Numbers of beds and named bedcovers in Huntingdonshire Probate Inventories together with number of inventories listing more than one bedcover type.

Samples in 5-year intervals in standard script, in 10-year intervals in *italic* script, 20-year intervals in **bold** script.

From these records, it would seem possible that the number of beds per household rises over the period. This matches Sneath's conclusion from his study of twenty parishes in Huntingdonshire from 1609 to 1800 where he found a mean number of two beds per household in 1600-1629 rising to three in 1750-1800. However, because of the small sampling from each period, the results from this current survey were skewed in certain cases by the occurrence of a few houses with a large number of beds. For example, the Devereux

family ran a school in Stilton and, when Price Devereux died in 1756, his household goods included thirty five beds and thirty seven named bedcovers.¹⁰³

The Roman Ermine Way from London was a traditional route to the north of England. Godmanchester and Huntingdon had significant positions on this Great North Road at each end of the bridge over the Great Ouse and the period saw great improvements in the road conditions particularly after the road north of Huntingdon became one of the first in England to be turnpiked in 1710.¹⁰⁴ As important coaching towns, Huntingdon and Godmanchester had a large number of inns that catered for many visitors and the contents of such premises would have a significant effect on the results.

It must be questioned whether the sampling size coupled with individual inventories containing very large number of beds allows an accurate calculation of beds per household in the period. However, what cannot be ignored is that the number of named bedcovers rises over the century whatever the quantity of beds per period sampled. In the late seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth century, only about half the beds listed had a bedcover. It seems that many late seventeenth century household members survived with only one or two blankets on the bed and the presence of such meagre bedding suggests that, in winter, some may have slept in or under their own clothes. At the end of the century and the beginning of the nineteenth century almost all beds in the sample had a bedcover. It would suggest that this survey of Huntingdonshire inventories demonstrates a rise in the acquisition of bedcovers, which could be regarded as an increased desire to enhance domestic comfort and an indicator of a growth in consumption.

Beds in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be generally categorised into high and low types. The high beds have four or two-posts designed to hold an overhead canopy or tester with curtains or bed-hangings. References to such beds appear throughout the period, but in inventories, it has to be assumed that some beds were four or two post bedsteads because they were described as being with hangings. Towards the end of the century, fashionable, new-style bedsteads such as tent, elliptic top and side-view beds feature in such records.

¹⁰³ AH15-21, Probate records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, probate inventories, Joseph Devereux 1746, Price Devereux 1756

¹⁰⁴ A. Akeroyd and C. Clifford, *Huntingdon Eight Centuries of History*, (Derby: Breedon Books, 2004), p.35

The low beds were either truckle, trundle and run beds, which were designed to wheel away underneath another bed and tended to be listed more in the earlier inventories, or stump (short-posted) beds, which are basic beds more likely to be used by servants. It is difficult to identify the kind of bed used by people in poorer circumstances since fewer inventories describe the possessions of the poor and the quality of the beds cannot be determined from the records. It is likely that second-hand furniture of variable condition would furnish plebeian homes, as confirmed by the paintings and prints of the period and would be a mixture of four-post, tester, press, truss, truckle and stump beds.

When rooms are used for both living and sleeping, stowaway beds or beds that adapt from other furniture were practical solutions to the lack of living space. The press or turn-up bed provided such a solution, appearing in various records throughout the period. It was usually a simple structure hinged up against the wall and sometimes hidden behind either cupboard doors or a curtain rod and curtains built onto the wall. The basic press bed occurs very rarely in the earlier Huntingdon inventories suggesting that the use of turn-up beds may have been more widespread in one-room urban lodgings rather than in rural areas. The truss or field bed, which can be taken apart for storage or transport, occurs in Huntingdonshire inventories from 1680 to 1705.

The bed settle, an early dual-purpose item of furniture, is listed in two of the 1680 Huntingdonshire inventories. From the middle of the eighteenth century onwards, other adaptable pieces of furniture are listed including bureau, desk, settee and couch beds. Such moveable folding beds were desirable and eminently practical whilst feeding the enthusiasm for metamorphic furniture towards the end of the century. In Huntingdonshire, the adaptability of such furniture was probably appreciated by Price Devereux of Stilton, who had ‘1 Bedstead sacking Bottom, 1 Chester draw Bed and 1 Bureau Bed’ in one of the rooms in his school in 1746 and Joseph Walker of Huntingdon who had a painted press bed and painted bureau bed in his inn in 1800.¹⁰⁵

It is possible that better-quality bedcovers were more likely to be found on high beds than lower-status trundle or stump beds. However this theory cannot be confirmed through the study of inventories. Beds that are ‘turned-up’ or concealed during the day by their nature

¹⁰⁵ AH15-21, Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, probate inventories, Price Devereux 1756, Joseph Walker 1800

also have concealed bedding and bedcovers. Such covers only need to function as warmth-giving layers without any requirement for show during the day.

Huntingdonshire: Bedcover Use.

The variation of the level of knowledge concerning domestic property between male and female householders was discussed earlier in the chapter with the suggestion that male inventory appraisers may have struggled to understand the nuances of bedcover nomenclature. However, some eighteenth-century householders and probate appraisers clearly had appreciated the difference between rugs, hillings, quilts, coverlets and counterpanes, if not the correct bedcover term, since the survey of Huntingdonshire probate inventories revealed a large number of households with more than one bedcover type in the inventory. Out of the three hundred and seventy four probate inventories surveyed, one hundred and thirty five households had more than one bedcover type and this rose to over fifty percent of households at times after 1750 (see table 2.7 above).

The numbers of named bedcovers, rugs, hillings, quilts, counterpanes and coverlets, are set out in table 2.8 below. Rugs were generally used with coverlets during the late seventeenth century with very few quilts and counterpanes recorded in surveyed households. However the rug appears to fall out of favour during the eighteenth century. The records of rugs after 1750 often appear in the beds of servants or in poorer households and it would appear that they were more likely to have been used on Dr Johnson's 'mean beds'. Two hillings were listed in the period 1705 to 1724.

Lemire's suggestion that quilts were widespread in southern England was not confirmed for the earlier period in Huntingdonshire.¹⁰⁶ Before 1700, it would seem that quilts were not 'commonplace' in Huntingdonshire, but they begin to appear more frequently in households from the middle of the century onwards becoming the most popular listed bedcover. No examples of double descriptions of bedcovers such as 'quilted coverlet' or 'quilted counterpane' were found in these inventories.

The recorded status of the owners of counterpanes before 1729 was gent (3), yeoman (3), clerk (1), innholder (2), husbandman (1) and widow (1). It could be speculated that the use of the counterpane term here suggests a more fashionable or higher status bedcover as in

¹⁰⁶ Lemire, *The British Cotton Trade*, (2010), p.229

Date	No. of inventories	Rug	Hilling	Quilt	Counterpane	Coverlet
1680-1684	20	11				25
1685-1689	20	12		1	2	12
1690-1694	20	19		1	4	23
1695-1699	19	12		2	1	14
1700-1704	20	29		21	3	10
1705-1709	20	15	1	4	1	17
1710-1714	20	50		27	7	17
1715-1719	20	15		4	3	17
1720-1724	20	19	1	13	2	12
1725-1729	20	15		14	1	9
1730-1734	15	13		7		13
1735-1739	20	8		18	1	15
1740-1744	20	13		45		9
1745-1749	20	6		25		10
<i>1750-1759</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>9</i>		<i>59</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>1760-1769</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>11</i>		<i>57</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>1770-1779</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>7</i>		<i>42</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>27</i>
1780-1799	20	5		41	3	34
1799-1819	20	4		53	15	21
Total	374	273	2	434	48	337

Table 2.8 Number of bedcovers types in Huntingdonshire 1680-1819.

Samples in 5-year periods in standard script, in 10-year periods in *italic* script, 20-year periods in **bold** script.

the Old Bailey records. Given the gap in entries for counterpane between 1730 and 1750, it may be that the description counterpane was applied to a different bedcover after the middle of the century and possibly refers to either woven Marseille (Marcella) covers or Bolton bedcovers. The Old Bailey results had demonstrated that woven bedcovers were confused with quilts by less discerning observers and it is possible that some quilts recorded in the later periods of the Huntingdonshire inventories were actually produced on a loom.

The apparent, general term coverlet is used throughout the century, in a contrast to the results from the Old Bailey study. Coverlet remains the second most popular bedcover term at the end of the period. The widespread use of coverlet in the probate records may add to the suggestion that it was used as a catch-all term; probate appraisers when faced with a bedcover that they did not recognise may have chosen it because of its generality.

Very few entries with supplementary descriptions of the named bedcovers were found, so any extra detail is an unexpected bonus. Two inventories list a total of four green rugs. From the middle of the eighteenth century white quilts were often listed in the records. This may suggest a reference to the Marseilles or weft loop bedcovers mentioned above, but without the adoption of the term counterpane.

The detailed 1817 inventory of the workrooms, shop and house belonging to John Fox, an upholsterer from Huntingdon, included the only mention of a 'Patch work Quilt' in his front bedroom. This inventory also lists a 'Marcellas Quilt' in the back bedroom.¹⁰⁷ Just after the period of this study, a 'Deal Tent Bedstead with Cotton Patch Work Hangings' and 'One 4 Post Wyche Bedstead, inside Rods, with cotton patchwork Hangings, patchwork Quilt' were listed in the 1821 inventory of a brewer from Buckden.¹⁰⁸ The only other reference to patchwork found was '3 Patch work Cushions' in a barber's inventory of 1762.¹⁰⁹

The Huntingdon inventories show that there was a change in preferred bedcover type over the period, although at a slower pace than in the Old Bailey cases, suggesting that, whilst Huntingdonshire consumers were still comparatively conservative, some were replacing the traditional and practical with the new and fashionable. However the lower number of counterpanes and the higher number of coverlets in the Huntingdonshire inventories at the end of the period of study suggests that Huntingdonshire householders spent less on their bedcovers than their metropolitan counterparts.

Published inventories listing bed covers from mid-Essex and Frampton Cotterell, Gloucestershire were examined and records extracted for comparison with Huntingdonshire from 1680 to 1729.¹¹⁰ The sample sizes before 1729 were quite small in both areas and after

¹⁰⁷ AH15-21, Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, probate inventory, John Fox 1817

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., probate inventory, George Camber 1821

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., probate inventory, John Triston 1762

¹¹⁰ Steer, *Farm and Cottage Inventories* (1950); Moore, *The Goods and Chattels of Our Forefathers*, (1976)

Date	No of Inv.	Rugg	Hilling	Quilt	Countpane	Coverlet
Mid Essex						
1680-1689	26	17			1	63
1690-1699	23	18		3	1	44
1700-1709	7	7		2		10
1710-1719	8	3		3		15
1720-1729	13	8		8		13
Total	77	53		16	2	145
Frampton Cotterell and District, Gloucestershire						
1680-1689	15	43			4	25
1690-1699	11	27				7
1700-1709	12	26		5	1	19
1710-1719	13	25		9		1
1720-1729	8	12				5
Total	59	133		14	5	57
Huntingdonshire						
1680-1689	40	23		1	2	37
1690-1699	39	31		3	5	37
1700-1709	40	44	1	25	4	27
1710-1719	40	65		31	10	34
1720-1729	40	34	1	27	3	21
Total	199	197	2	87	24	156

Table 2.9 Comparison of numbers of bedcover types in Mid–Essex, Frampton Cotterell, Gloucestershire and Huntingdonshire Probate Inventories 1680-1729. Set in ten-year intervals.

this time were too low to allow meaningful comparison (see table 2.9 above). The results show a slow growth in the number of quilts and a small number of counterpane entries. The status of the owners of the counterpanes that were recorded was gent (1), esquire (2) and yeoman (2). The catch-all term coverlet was the most popular bedcover type in mid-Essex. Rugs were more common in the sheep grazing county of Gloucestershire. This was part of a rug producing area as suggested by the Bristol and Torrington rugs which were exported to colonial America in the middle of the century.

Conclusion

The presence of a large proportion of bedcovers in the database of patchwork objects, which is examined in Chapter 1, highlighted the need to consider them in the context of their use within the eighteenth-century bedroom. However many sources concerning bedroom design, furniture and bed furnishing relate to elite and genteel households and evidence from middling and plebeian families is limited. Two different documentary sources, which covered the entire period of study, provided an opportunity to consider bedcovers and beds from families below the elite in metropolitan London and the small rural county of Huntingdonshire and highlighted a possible difference in the level of knowledge of bedroom furnishing between men and women at the time.

Records of over thirteen hundred trials heard at the Old Bailey in London allowed a consideration of the use of various bedcover types and their values in London and Middlesex over the period together with an analysis of bedcover nomenclature. It demonstrated a growth in use of quilts and counterpanes, despite the higher median values for these two bedcovers, and the comparative low ownership of coverlets. In particular it revealed a growing taste for the white cotton counterpane.

The descriptions provided by prosecutors and witnesses together with the bedcover terms used were related to definitions provided by the lexicographers of the period including Johnson, Bailey and Dyche. The descriptions suggest that some nomenclature relating to bedcovers was not precise and static during the period. Rugs are listed throughout the period and the term appears to be employed consistently for a shaggy wool covering. The term coverlet was used to describe bedcovers in the Old Bailey cases that were made from cotton, linen, wool or worsted, but were not associated with silk. The coverlets had no unique distinguishing features suggesting that it was used as a catch-all term covering a variety of coverings with relative low monetary value.

While quilt was used throughout the period to describe a three-layer, wadded cover, it was also employed for woven covers that were made to ape the look of the hand-stitched, 'Marseille' corded quilt. The term counterpane appears to move from describing bespoke covers, tailored to fit high-status beds, to defining white cotton bedcovers after the introduction of woven quilting and hand-woven, weft loop Bolton covers. It was frequently confused with quilts in the second half of the eighteenth century. Despite this apparent

change from elite use to a more widely available bedcovering, the counterpane retained the highest median valuations of all the four bedcovers that were mentioned in Old Bailey cases.

The survey of Old Bailey court cases provided an urban perspective when compared with probate records from the Archdeaconry of Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire probate inventories in the period 1680 to 1820, which listed named bedcovers, provided data on bed and bedcover ownership. While the number of Huntingdonshire inventories studied was too small to provide an accurate analysis of the number of beds, a growth in the number of beds per household over the period was suggested. Significantly a growth in the ownership of bedcovers from approximately half the beds having a bedcover in the early part of the study period to approximately one per bed at the end of the period was recorded. In addition there was a growth in the ownership of more than one bedcover type over the period in Huntingdonshire. It is suggested that these could be used to demonstrate an increased desire to enhance domestic comfort and may be an indicator of a growth in consumption in the area.

The comparison of results from the Old Bailey trials and Huntingdonshire probate records revealed an unsurprising difference in bedcover use between London and rural Huntingdonshire. This contrast between metropolitan London and a small rural county could be further explored by a similar in-depth study of probate records from London.¹¹¹

The developing taste for the cotton counterpane in London was not seen in Huntingdonshire where the coverlet continued to be owned and used in large numbers. The widespread use of the term coverlet by probate appraisers may have been due to its broad definition as a low-value cover made from wool, linen or cotton. The suggestion that the use of quilts in Southern England was widespread is not confirmed in the earlier period in Huntingdonshire. Quilts only become the most popular bedcover here in the second half of the eighteenth century. The relative median values of bedcovers found in London demonstrates that more of the higher-valued quilts and counterpanes were acquired there and Huntingdonshire householders were, perhaps, more conservative in their spending.

Patchwork occurs as a descriptive term for bedcovers in Old Bailey cases after the middle of the eighteenth century and is the only term used occasionally after about 1803 when fibres were no longer mentioned. Objects were rarely described in probate inventories

¹¹¹ These London probate records were used in a similar way in order to analyse floor coverings in the century : S. Sarin, 'The Floorcloth and other floor coverings in the London Domestic Interior 1700-1800', *Journal of Design History*, xviii, (2005), pp.133-45

with the suggestion that only the objects that were noticeably different from the norm, thus affecting their valuation, were accompanied by a marker term. It is, perhaps, not surprising that patchwork did not occur very frequently in the Huntingdonshire inventories.

Modern patchwork bedcovers are usually termed patchwork quilts although un-quilted patchwork covers, possibly with an added back lining, are often ascribed the term of coverlet instead. The study of bedcovers recorded in trials heard at the Old Bailey was unable to reveal the eighteenth-century terminology for such quilted and un-quilted patchwork bedcovers. Of the twenty eight patchwork covers recorded from 1680 to 1820, thirteen were described as quilts, twelve were termed counterpanes and three were called coverlets. While in a few trial records there is an understanding of how the owners used their bedcovers, there is no clear indication in all cases of what the possessions meant to them beyond the loss of an object with some value. In the absence of contemporary descriptions together with the record of the name of the bedcover, how eighteenth-century owners and makers defined their patchwork bedcovers remains uncertain.

Chapter 3 Owners and Makers of Patchwork

‘I have made patchwork beyond calculation, from seven years old to eighty-five.’ Catherine Hutton¹

In an account of her life written a year before she died, Catherine Hutton (1757-1846), daughter of William Hutton, described how patchwork had been part of her life since she first stitched a piece when she was seven years old. An intelligent and literate woman who included Charles Dickens and Edward Bulwer Lytton amongst her correspondents, Catherine came from an upwardly-mobile, Birmingham non-conformist family. Her patchwork was not a way of making the most of spare fabric scraps or evidence of her family living in straitened circumstances, but was a decorative needlecraft that she was content to practice for her entire life in periods between other domestic duties, her writing and extensive travels around Britain.

Few of the patchwork objects made in this period have arrived at the present day with details of the maker’s name and most of these do not provide useful evidence of the family’s location, social status or occupation. It is necessary therefore to draw on documentary evidence in order to discover the owners and makers of the period and understand the social context in which patchwork was made. Using the relatively small number of references to material patchwork in the period, this chapter examines needlewomen who, together with Catherine Hutton, stitched patchwork and the owners who had patchwork furnishings and accessories in their homes.

The chapter addresses the conundrum that patchwork was announced as ‘the fashion of this Age’ by a playwright, Thomas Baker, at a time when Mary Smith, a servant, was also stitching patchwork.² It considers the possible difference between a patchwork counterpane valued at 6 pence cited in a case heard at the Old Bailey in 1782 and ‘a Bedstead with carved Mahogany Posts, and very rich and curious patch-work Furniture, composed of Gold and Silver Embroidery, Velvet, Silk, &c.’ the property of the late Robert Rogers, Esq. that was

¹ Mrs. C. H. Beale, ed., *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman of the Last Century Letters of Catherine Hutton*, (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1891), p.213

² T. Baker, *Hampstead Heath*, (London, 1706); *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1712 trial of Mary Smith (t17120910-27), www.oldbaileyonline.org, accessed: 24 November 2008

sold at auction a year later.³ It argues that, since the term could describe two different kinds of textile, patchwork was perceived differently by upper and lower social classes.

Documentary Sources

The history of patchwork in the long eighteenth century follows two separate narrative strands. One focuses on the household possessions and leisure pursuits of genteel and middling women while the other, through the records of criminal cases, publications and inventories, reveals some of the more obscure patchwork lives of plebeian women. Genteel and middling women usually had more possessions of value, which prompted the listing of their household textiles during their life and in probate inventories after their death. The presence or lack of detail regarding textiles in household and probate inventories is discussed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 2). There are noticeably more descriptive details of textiles, including patchwork, seen in advertisements in local newspapers of probate sales of property from wealthier households.

Plebeian possessions do not feature regularly in such lists and accounts of the daily life of women lower down the social scale are rarely recorded however. It is through records of court cases, in particular those heard at the Old Bailey and newspaper reports that some clues to the needlewomen who stitched or used patchwork under more difficult conditions can be uncovered.

The lives of eighteenth-century women in better circumstances were not completely filled with burdensome tasks allowing them the freedom to spend time in working decorative needlework as well as keeping up with the chores of buying, making and repairing household textiles. Such women were literate and, alongside their other activities, frequently set time aside to record their daily routine at home in day journals and diaries; the discipline of keeping a regular record of her life came more easily to a woman who had servants to do the more time-consuming tasks. Anna Larpent was an assiduous diarist keeping copious notes of her home life, religious practice, teaching duties, reading matter, entertainment and needlework projects in the early years of her married life from 1790, but, even for her, the boring repetitive nature of her days later led her to skip days in the journal '25-31 Dec

³ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, July 1782 trial of Hannah Smith (t17820703-14), accessed: 3 February 2009; *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 25 October 1783, p3 The British Newspaper Archive, www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk, accessed: 21 May 2012

Nothing remarkable occurred but our daily occupations – walks – work – hearing boys read &c.’⁴

Such daily records are a valuable resource for the study of women’s needlework practice providing a view into feminine life at home, but sadly not all have survived in a relatively, un-edited state.⁵ It would appear that many editors of diaries and letters, who were frequently descendents of the author, were selective in their management of the original texts choosing to censor more negative entries or remove passages that refer to events, which the editor regard as superfluous to the general tone of the text. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century in particular, some family members who edited their ancestor’s diaries from the previous century seem to have regarded domestic activities, including needlework, as unnecessary and of little interest.⁶ The editor of Mrs. Philip Lybbe Powys’s diaries and travel journals tells us that Mrs Powys was ‘a skilled needlewoman....She embroidered, worked in cloth, straw plaited, feather worked, made pillow lace, paper mosaic work &c.’, but the published, edited text describes her regular society outings and trips around the countryside and not her needlework activity.⁷

It may well be that some authors did not wish to perpetuate the accounts of their mundane domestic life choosing to exclude such details from their diaries. Those who produced reminiscences in later years, which looked back on their upbringing and lifestyle, may also have edited out the routine in favour of the significant, exciting and eventful.⁸

⁴ The journals of Mrs Anna Larpent 1790-1830 are held in the Huntington Library, California, USA, ref. HM 31201; Microfilm of the journals can be seen at the British Library M1016/1-7 and this reference is used in this chapter; M1016/1 Vol. 1, 31 December 1795

⁵ Diaries include A. M. Earle, *Diary of Anna Green Winslow A Boston School Girl of 1771*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1895), available at The Project Gutenberg eBook, www.gutenberg.org accessed: 12 March 2012; J. Beresford, *The Diary of a Country Parson: The Reverend James Woodforde 1758-1802, Vols. I-V*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927-32); A. Saville, ed., *Secret Comment: The Diaries of Gertrude Savile 1721-1757*, (Devon and Nottinghamshire: Kingsbridge History Society and the Thoroton Society, 1997); S. C. Djabri, *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst 1759-1762: Life and Love in Eighteenth century Horsham*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2003)

⁶ F. J. Harvey Darton, ed., *The Life and Times of Mrs Sherwood (1775-1851) From the Diaries of Captain and Mrs Sherwood*, (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton and Co., 1910); M. Carberry, ed. *Mrs Elizabeth Freke Her Diary 1671-1714*, (Cork: Guy and Co., 1913); A. Henstock, *The Diary of Abigail Gawthorn of Nottingham 1751-1810*, Thoroton Society Record Series, Vol. XXXIII, (Nottingham: Thoroton Soc., 1980)

⁷ E. J. Climeson, *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon A.D. 1756 to 1808*, (London, 1899), p.159

⁸ M. Robinson, *Memoirs of the Late Mrs. Robinson Written by Herself from the Edition Edited by her Daughter*, (London, 1826); A. Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton of East Newton, Co. York*, Surtees Society, Vol. 1834, (Durham, 1875); Beale, *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman*, (1891); F. Paget Hett, ed., *The Memoirs of Susan Sibbald 1783-1812*, (London: The Bodley Head, 1926); C. Aspinall-Oglander, ed., *Admiral’s Wife Being the Life and Letters of The Hon. Mrs. Edward Boscawen from 1719 to 1761*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940); E. Hall, ed., *Miss Weeton’s Journal of a Governess*, 2 vols. (Devon: David

Sarah Cowper (1644-1720) started her diary in her fifties and used it to express her unhappiness at the perceived mistreatment by her husband, children and servants and to record her religious observance saying:

...some may think my writing so much, a very dull drudgery. But it sufficeth to satisfy me in the practise, that I find it otherwise at worst, it may be allowed an Employ^m as significant as any sort of work I can do, and if for every stitch y^e others prick in a Clout, I with pen set a letter upon paper; that, as long may remain a witness to purge me from y^e scandal of Idleness, as the worst of a Needle. Certain it is I shall leave store enough of both writing and work w^c in my youth wasted too much (I think) of my Eies and Time.⁹

She rarely made any reference to needlework afterwards. Later in the century Mrs Fletcher recorded that her dead mother's friend, Mrs. Brudenell, 'failed to impart to her pupil, the love of needlework' so it is hardly surprising that her memoirs do not dwell on such activity.¹⁰

Earning a Living from Patchwork

This research was undertaken on the premise that patchwork was, generally, a domestic needlework technique since a review of the literature has revealed little evidence that there were many professional makers of patchwork. Only two of the objects recorded in the database, both from the first half of the eighteenth century, were thought possibly to have been made in embroidery workshops. They contain ornate designs that show a rich mix of embroidery techniques including appliqué as well as patchwork.¹¹

However a few references in a variety of documents toward the end of the period suggest that some may have earned their living by making patchwork. At a trial heard at the Old Bailey in 1791, Mary Owen was found guilty of stealing cotton remnants from her employer who ran an upholsterer's shop. The crime was uncovered when he found out that she was raffling a patchwork counterpane, which can be assumed was for her own benefit and

and Charles Reprints, 1969); A. Henstock, *The Diary of Abigail Gawthern*; E. Gillett, (1945), *Elizabeth Ham by Herself 1783-1820*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1980)

⁹ D/EP/F29, Dame Sarah Cowper of Hertford diaries Vol. 1, 1700-02, 3 March 1700/01, p.67, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

¹⁰ Mrs Fletcher, *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher with Letters and Other Family Memorials, Edited by the Survivor of her Family*, (Edinburgh: Edmonton and Douglas, 1875)

¹¹ Bishops Court quilt database 106, Collection of V&A T. 201-1984, see S. Prichard, edit. *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*, (London, V&A Publishing, 2010), p.172 ; Coverlet fragment database 101, Collection of Colonial Williamsburg, Va., USA, 2005-1-A

he recognised that many of the patchwork pieces were from his stock.¹² Evidence given in the trial of John Jellison and Thomas Bellamy in 1794 revealed that a police officer went to search Bellamy's house. He appears to have associated professional quilting with patchwork when he was asked whether he knew that Bellamy's wife was a quilter and replied 'I don't know, there was some such thing in the house as patch work....In a box there was other clothes and some of this patch stuff in the box'¹³

An obituary in the *Bury and Norwich Post* records John Browne, tailor, of St Peter's in Hungate who died aged eighty four in 1802. He was 'well known for his ingenuity in patchwork, some of which he had exhibited to most of the nobility in this kingdom'.¹⁴ The association of tailors with patchwork made for exhibition is well known later in the nineteenth century when such pieces were regarded as valuable textiles because of the money to be made from the exhibitions as well as the hours of work they represented. In the period 1830 to 1870 a number of complex, wool, intarsia patchwork were made to be shown in public, including at the Great Exhibition of 1851 and many of the known makers were working tailors.¹⁵

Needlework exhibitions in London were regularly advertised in *The Daily Universal Register* during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Mrs Newton promoted her 'Exhibition of Needle-Work, At No. 139, Long-Acre, near St Martin's-Lane. Admittance One Shilling Each' in 1786 while, a year later, a rival display appeared 'To the Ladies, Exhibition of Needle-work, No 12, Upper King-Street, Bloomsbury, Admittance One Shilling each Person'.¹⁶ In 1787 there was an exhibition at Cook's, No. 15 Red-Lion Street, Holborn of 'a curious Collection of Fancy-Work' costing one shilling a person and 'Cook's Exhibition of Needleworks, and Fillagree Manufactory' at 'No 277, High Holborn was still being advertised in 1804'.¹⁷ Miss Mary Linwood (1755-1845) was known widely for her 'worsted' embroideries specialising in crewel-work copies of paintings by masters such as Rubens,

¹² *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, June 1791 trial of Mary Owen (t179110608-1) accessed: 19 April 2011

¹³ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, February 1794 trial of John Jellison and Thomas Bellamy (t17940219-22), accessed: 2 January 2012

¹⁴ *Bury and Norwich Post*, Wednesday 8 May 1802, p3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

¹⁵ C. Rose, 'Exhibiting Knowledge: British Inlaid Patchwork' in D. Neuland-Kitzerow, S. Joram and E. Karasek, edit., *Inlaid Patchwork in Europe from 1500 to the Present*, (Berlin: Museum Europäischer Kulturen Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2009), pp.87-98

¹⁶ *The Daily Universal Register*, Thursday 7 December 1786, p1, The Times Newspaper Archive, accessed: 25 April 2012; *The Daily Universal Register*, Saturday 17 March 1787, p1, The Times Newspaper Archive, accessed: 25 April 2012

¹⁷ *The Daily Universal Register*, Monday 2 April 1787, p1, The Times Newspaper Archive, accessed 25 April 2012; *The Norfolk Chronicle: or The Norwich Gazette*, Saturday 24 November 1804, p1, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 21 May 2012

Raphael and Gainsborough. She began exhibiting her work in London in her early twenties and opened a series of exhibitions at the concert rooms in Hanover Square in 1798.¹⁸ Mrs Larpent, an experienced needlewoman herself, visited the exhibition twice in that year writing that she was impressed by the mastery with which Miss Linwood had reproduced full-sized copies of the pictures.¹⁹ It is possible that John Browne may have used patchwork for such charging exhibitions three decades before other well-known male makers.

Anthony Davies was also a tailor and he made a patchwork coverlet in the early nineteenth century when he worked at the Royal Shop in London. His coverlet contains scraps of woollen, Melton cloth which were left over from the making of military uniforms, but his patchwork design with a sunray centre surrounded by rows of square-in-square blocks appears to be too simple to merit its use in a paying exhibition. It is unknown whether Anthony Davies made the coverlet for his own use.²⁰

Joseph Hedley or ‘Joe the Quilter’ (1750-1826) trained as a tailor, but later turned to travelling around the Tynedale area of the north of England as an itinerant quilter. A number of quilts survive, which are thought to have been made by him. Although he was known mainly for his skill in designing and stitching wholecloth quilts, one patchwork quilt has also been attributed to him. Joe met an untimely end when he was murdered in his cottage seemingly by someone who felt that he had money. In fact he was a poor man who received parish relief and spent many years nursing his wife.²¹

In 1817, *The Manchester Mercury* recorded with admiration the exploits of a professional patchworker in Exeter who ‘appeared to be a pattern of diligence, industry and sobriety’. She had been brought before the magistrate on suspicion of a crime after taking forty three pounds of old silver to exchange, but was able to explain satisfactorily how she got so much by saying that she ‘daily searches the streets of Exeter, to procure tieders and rags, for a livelihood’. She claimed that she never relied upon parish relief, but earned a living by selling the worst of the rags to the paper makers ‘and what would do for her patchwork she made into quilts, and sold to the brokers and farmers.’²²

¹⁸ <http://www.meg-andrews.com/item-details/Mary-Linwood/6374> , accessed 27 June 2012

¹⁹ Larpent, March 12 1798 and April 7 1798, Vol. 2, M1016/1

²⁰ Coverlet database 150, Collection of St. Fagans: National History Museum, 35.439

²¹ D. Osler, *North Country Quilts: Legend and Living Tradition*, (Barnard Castle, Co. Durham: The Bowes Museum, 2000), p.10; quilt said to have been made by Joseph Hedley, database 77, Collection of Beamish The Living Museum of the North, 1972 658.120

²² *Manchester Mercury*, Tuesday 11 March 1817, p.2, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

At the end of the period of study, it would appear that commercially produced patchwork was available. The entire stock in trade of Mr T Freame, an upholsterer in Hereford, was advertised to be sold at auction over four days in 1818 including ‘twenty Patch-work Coverlids’.²³ His business may not have been unusual and, interestingly, the only patchwork quilt that was listed in the Huntingdonshire probate inventories from 1680 to 1820 was in the inventory of an upholsterer.²⁴

In the early nineteenth century, concern was expressed from a number of quarters about the conditions for female prison inmates and much has been recorded about the work of Quakers, such as Elizabeth Fry, in attempting to alleviate the problem. After visits to Newgate prison Mrs Fry and like-minded women formed the Association for the Improvement of Women Prisoners in 1816 and later the British Ladies Society for the Reformation of Female Prisoners. They planned to implement a system of offering active employment to prisoners; the Society saw that needlework would be a good way to occupy the women’s time. By 1818 Elizabeth Fry reported that about eighty women were making clothing and knitting from 60 to 100 pairs of stockings a month.²⁵

The Norfolk Chronicle featured Notes on Prisons written by Fry’s brother, Mr Joseph John Gurney, a notable Norwich Friend and banker, after his visit to prisons in the North of England and Scotland with his sister in 1819. Concerning discipline in prisons, he emphasised the importance of securing the employment of prisoners; a consideration ‘not only in the arrangement of any new place of confinement for culprits, but also in our present jails’. He said that ‘the knitting, sewing, patch-work and carpet-work, in which it is very suitable to employ females, requires but little space’ and would be suitable for current prison accommodation.²⁶

Gurney felt that prisoners should be allowed a proportion of the amount earned from their production in order to stimulate them ‘to willing and persevering industry’ and ‘raise him a purse of money against the day of his discharge from prison’. It is known that, by 1821, The Society for the Reformation of Female Prisoners donated sewing equipment including

²³ *Hereford Journal*, Wednesday 25 November 1818, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

²⁴ AH15-21, Probate Records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon 1585-1858, Huntingdon Archives and Local Studies, probate inventory, John Fox 1817

²⁵ E. R. Pitman, *Elizabeth Fry*, (London, 1884), p.58 cited in C. Ferguson, ‘A Study of Quakers, Convicts and Quilts’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue 8, (2008), pp.35-64

²⁶ J. J. Gurney, *General Observations of Employment of Prisoners*, (London, 1819); *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 27 February 1819, p4, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

two pounds of patchwork pieces, which is equivalent to nearly ten yards of cloth, to each woman prisoner to be used in this way. A quilt and a coverlet are associated with this prison work and they are described as being made under the direction of Elizabeth Fry by women prisoners in Newgate prison. The quilt includes an embroidered, central panel, dated 1817, containing the names of Elizabeth Baker, Elizabeth Fry and John Fry. The coverlet features blocks of patchwork hexagon shapes, which are applied onto a linen background; the needlework is described as ‘poor quality’.²⁷ The ethic of using patchwork to assist female prisoners to earn a small amount of money continued after some were transported to Australia. It was hoped that items stitched during the long journey would be of value for trade at ports along the route or after the prisoners arrived.²⁸

The Patchwork Lives of Women of Lower Rank

When Mary Smith, a servant, was accused by her former employer of stealing a piece of silk patchwork in a case heard at the Old Bailey in 1712, some detail of the patchwork life of a working woman was uncovered. At a time when Thomas Baker was using patchwork in his plays to show it was a fashionable needlework that was stitched by ladies of leisure, Mary called upon several ‘credible’ people who spoke on her behalf and was acquitted when evidence was given claiming that some helped her make the patchwork and others gave her some of the silk fabric that made up the piece. It was clearly believable that a servant also stitched patchwork and she lived in a community where such needlework was practised.²⁹ Records of cases heard at the Old Bailey throughout the period revealed more owners and makers of patchwork from the plebeian and lower middling classes and the table (see table 3.1 below) demonstrates the kinds of employment of the owner, or husband of the owner or maker of the patchwork stolen or used in evidence between 1700 and 1820. However it is impossible in most cases to determine the actual occupation of the owners because of a relatively restricted list of occupational descriptions used in the court.³⁰ It is unknown whether the tradesmen listed are journeymen or master craftsmen, which would have some influence over their position in society and the income bracket they occupied. Exceptions are

²⁷ Quilt, database 200, Coverlet, database 201, Collection of Norwich Castle Museum, Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service 1946.110.1 and 1946.110.2

²⁸ Ferguson, ‘A Study of Quakers’, (2008)

²⁹ T. Baker, *Tunbridge Walks: or, the Yeoman of Kent*, (London, 1703), p.21; T. Baker, *Hampstead Heath*, (London, 1708), Prologue; *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1712 trial of Mary Smith (t17120910-27), accessed: 24 November 2008

³⁰ Styles found this to be a problem when considering owners of stolen clothing during a similar period, see J. Styles, *The Dress of the People Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-Century England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), Appendix 1 Sources, pp.327-31

	1700-1719		1720-1739		1740-1759		1760-1779		1780-1799		1800-1819	
	Own.	Mak.	Own.	Mak.	Own.	Mak.	Own.	Mak.	Own.	Mak.	Own.	Mak.
Poor woman												1
Servant	1	1							1		2	
Widow					1							
Weaver									1			
Quilter										1		
Labourer/soldier											1	
Laundress											1	
Upholsterer fore woman										1		
Tenant									1	1	3	
Plasterer											1	
Shoemaker									1			
Occupations of higher status												
Manchester Men												1
Publican/wife									1	1	1	
Lodging Keeper									7	1	9	1
Lodging Keeper plus Second Trade												
Lk + Cornchandler									1			
Lk + Shoemaker									1			
Lk + Weaver											1	
Lk + Ship Steward											1	
Lk + Instrument maker											1	

Table 3.1 Employment of owners and makers of patchwork mentioned in cases at the Old Bailey 1700-1819. Set in twenty-year intervals

Edward Reynolds who kept a shoemaker's shop in 1794 suggesting that he was a craftsman of some position and William Thomas, a journeyman plasterer, who lost a piece of patchwork valued one shilling when his house was burgled in 1803.³¹ However a distinction can be made between the plebeian workers such as servants, labourers, laundresses, quilters and

³¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, February 1794 trial of Aby Tory (t17940219-48), February 1803 trial of John Jonqua and Richard Gale (t18030216-28), accessed: 24 November 2008

weavers and those in a better situation such as Manchester men, publicans and lodging keepers.

The makers of patchwork included a servant, 'poor' woman, quilter, upholsterer forewoman and tenant. Women makers of somewhat higher status were a publican's wife and lodging keepers. Clearly lodging keepers were wealthier being owners or tenants of at least one property, but it is difficult to discern whether the lodging mentioned in the Old Bailey cases was one of many properties in the landlord's portfolio and also to understand the quality of the lodgings. Rents of lodgings in cases concerning the loss of patchwork ranged from £7.0.0 a year (approximately 2s 9d a week) to six shillings a week in the 1780s and 1790s while the frequently mentioned rate in the early nineteenth century was four shillings and six pence a week. George Hubbard appears to have occupied well-furnished lodgings in Ludgate Hill when goods valued at £15.14s, including a patchwork quilt value ten shillings, were stolen in 1797, but this seems to be an exception; the majority of cases concerning patchwork were connected to simpler lodgings.³²

Styles's study of cases concerning crimes committed in furnished lodgings in the 1750s and 1790s highlighted the fact that the majority were concerning relatively inexpensive rooms and in only eight cases out of ninety nine, where the rent was recorded, was the rent higher than seven shillings a week. On average the rent was two shillings and sixpence in the 1750s and three shillings in the 1790s and these results when compared with this current research would suggest that the majority of lodgers in the cases involving stolen patchwork were likely to have occupied inexpensive lodgings, probably a single furnished room. Examination of stolen furniture and furnishings from lodgings revealed that even the modestly furnished room could contain objects following the growing taste for goods that could also be seen in landlords' households.³³ The quality of such goods would be variable however and landlords would not exceed their budget for furnishing the lodgings if it could not be matched by an appropriate market rent.

Historians of the eighteenth century have debated at length the degree to which plebeian and lower middling families were in a position to acquire many material goods. The current thinking is that their disposable incomes were low with the much of their earnings

³² *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, February 1797 trial of Sarah Morris (t17970215-23), accessed: 3 January 2009

³³ J. Styles, 'Lodging at the Old Bailey: Lodgings and Their Furnishings' in J. Styles, and A. Vickery, eds., *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America, 1700-1830*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.61-80

being spent of food and housing, particularly after 1780s when patchwork ownership was most recorded. Parson David Davies began examining the budgets of labouring families living in his Berkshire parish in 1787 and found that the majority spent most of their weekly earnings on food often only setting aside a few pence for thread and worsted to cover the cost of repairing their clothing.³⁴

Value of Patchwork	1770-79	1780-89	1790-99	1800-09	1810-19
Under 1 shilling		1	1	2	
1 to 1s 11d	1		5	1	2
2 to 2s 11d			3		2
3 shillings			1		2
4 shillings			1	1	2
5 shillings		1	2		2
6 shillings					
7 shillings					1
8 shillings				2	
9 shillings					
10 shillings			1	1	1

Table 3.2 Value of Patchwork Stolen at the Old Bailey 1770-1819, by decade.

Those residing in London frequently lived in a material world that was constructed by employers or landlords. Styles used the term ‘involuntary consumption’ when examining the clothing of the parish poor, inmates of charitable institutions and servants, but it is also appropriate when considering the large majority of London families living in furnished lodgings who relied upon their landlord to provide the necessary pieces of furniture, household equipment and bedding.³⁵ Their own possessions may have been little more than their clothing and accessories. For Mary Bailey, an out of work servant, the loss of a patchwork counterpane valued at three shillings and Margaret Day the theft of her box of belongings, mostly clothes, but including a piece of patchwork valued at eighteen pence, from their lodgings would have been significant.³⁶

³⁴ Rev. D. Davies, , *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry*, (Bath 1795)

³⁵ Styles, *The Dress of the People*, (2007)

³⁶ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, July 1811 trial of Mary Bailey (t18110710-79), October 1813 trial of Prudence Wood and Ann Clarke (t18131027-85), accessed: 3 February 2009

The value of the patchwork bedcovers, pieces of patchwork and patchwork pockets that were recorded as stolen in cases at the Old Bailey ranges from six pence to ten shillings (see table 3.2 above). If two small objects, both patchwork pockets, are removed from the results, the larger remaining objects have a median value ranging from two shillings in 1790 to 1799, four shillings in 1800 to 1809 and three shillings and six pence in the period 1810 to 1820. These median values are very similar in range to all quilts and coverlets of the same period, but lower than counterpanes (see table 2.2 in Chapter 2). Owners of such goods whether tenant or householder would have been affected by their loss.

The value of patchwork bedcovers, if small, was sufficient for them to act as currency in times of need. Many of the stolen patchwork objects, recorded at the Old Bailey, were tracked down in London pawnbroker's shops. A regular inconvenience for lodging keepers was tenants pawning their landlords' bedding in order to generate immediate cash. Pawnbroker George Fettes of York recorded patchwork items in his pledge book in 1777-8; patchwork quilts, counterpanes and cradle covers passed through his hands. Two patchwork counterpanes were a convenient source of money for Hannah Pears of Davygate in York. Between March and July 1778, one or other or both counterpanes were repeatedly pledged and redeemed together with other household textiles and garments for sums ranging from one pound and one shilling to seven shillings. Both counterpanes were re-pledged on 24 July; there is no record of them being retrieved.³⁷

Outside the records of the Old Bailey it is difficult to find references to lower-rank owners of patchwork. The Fettes book recorded a patchwork cradle cover, apron, coarse sleeves and a handkerchief pledged by a 'bricklayer labourer' for two shillings.³⁸ Entries in probate inventories include those of a Liverpool grocer who owned 'Six Pach worke cushins' in 1709, Joseph Wayman, a Ludlow peruke maker, who had one old patchwork quilt in his middle chamber in 1748 and in 1762 John Triston, a barber from St Neots, Huntingdonshire, owned 3 patchwork cushions, but again the status of these tradesmen cannot be discerned.³⁹

The silk patchwork chasuble and maniple, dated 1720-30 and owned by the Arundell family of Wardour Castle in Wiltshire, may have connections to lower-rank needlewomen

³⁷ Pledge book of George Fettes, 1777-8, Accession 38, York City Archive

³⁸ Pledge book of George Fettes, 20 February 1778, 0038.228

³⁹ Dictionary Project, University of Wolverhampton, Dr. N.C. Cox, personal communication 14 September 2010; Archdeaconry of Huntingdon probate inventories, John Triston 1762

(see Fig. 11).⁴⁰ The two pieces have been constructed using a mosaic patchwork-style technique where the pieces of fabric have been wrapped over shapes (or templates) cut in a coarsely-woven fabric, probably linen. This coarse fabric may have been stiffened before use as templates, but was probably not as easy to use as the paper templates utilised in the standard mosaic patchwork technique since the pieces are joined together with coarse, uneven stitching. The substitution of fabric for paper templates together with the poor quality of the stitching would suggest that the two pieces were not made in a professional workshop or by skilled needlewomen in the immediate family. It could be speculated that the patchwork technique may have been passed on by members of the family, but they were actually stitched by women in the wider Wardour congregation.

The Arundells were a prominent Catholic family who were isolated within a largely Protestant county and experienced many of the problems suffered by recusant families. Following the Civil War and moving into the early eighteenth century, the family appear to have exercised, what Bossy in his *English Catholic Community 1570-1850* describes as ‘prudent withdrawal’. They lived a settled life as a part of the Wiltshire landowning elite with their household, together with tenants under the protection of the Arundell name, forming the largest congregation of Roman Catholics within Wiltshire.⁴¹ For most of the eighteenth century, the Arundells maintained two Jesuits at Wardour; one as domestic chaplain and one as tenant missionary.⁴² The first half of the eighteenth century was the period between the loss of a chapel in Old Wardour Castle and the building of the chapel of All Saints in the New Wardour Castle in 1776. The Arundell family participated in private worship away from public attention using silver and vestments already in their possession, but it is unclear where the larger recusant community attended Mass during this period.

At that time, it would not have been appropriate to order costly new vestments from professional sources and although they were stitched using pieces of a variety of high-status velvets, plushes, damasks, brocades and tissues, the chasuble and maniple were not professionally made. Their making would appear to be a project that was undertaken discretely either by servants within the Arundell household or on the Wardour estates and it could be imagined that they were intended for the tenant missionary’s use as he travelled around to his congregation. This suggests family patronage; the facilitating of the project

⁴⁰ Chasuble and maniple, database 9 and 10, Private owner

⁴¹ J. Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975)

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.260

through the gifting of the cloth for the patchwork or the supervision of the work. References in the Sacristan's book at Wardour Chapel confirm that wedding and court suits were given by successive Lord and Lady Arundells to be made into vestments.⁴³ Such gifts to the Church would have acknowledged the donor's commitment to the faith and, in the case of a church attached to an elite household, would have shown the paternalistic connection of the family to the wider congregation. Needlework was part of a woman's practical training in preparation for her future life as an able manager of her husband's household and Arundell women would have been aware of their supervisory duties.

It has been recorded that needlework was carried out in charitable institutions and parish workhouses throughout the period, but only one reference to patchwork has been found. The *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal* reported the shocking murder of a resident of the parish workhouse near Spalding, Lincolnshire in 1817. A young woman had been in the workhouse since she was made blind by the smallpox and 'amused herself with making pincushions, which she did in a superior style, and at other times, patchwork, equally ingenious and much admired'.⁴⁴

A set of patchwork bed hangings in a unique clamshell design from the second quarter of the eighteenth century could also be connected with needlework made in or for a charitable organisation (see Fig. 16). Family records suggest that the hangings were stitched on the Harpur Trust estate of about thirteen acres of land in Holborn, London, which was developed for housing in the late seventeenth century. The trust funded a boys' school, sponsored boys' and girls' apprenticeships and assisted the poor in Sir William Harpur's birth town of Bedford, although the hangings' accession records mistakenly stated that 'the whole neighbourhood quilted on account of the Duke of Bedford's claim'.⁴⁵

The design is composed of blocks of forty nine clamshell patches made from a large variety of printed cotton and linens of Indian and European origin; each block is edged by green silk tape. The clamshell patches have been prepared on fabric template foundations rather than the usual paper templates seen in mosaic patchwork and have been assembled by applying them in overlapping rows like tiles on a roof. It is possible that the selection of an unique construction technique to create individual blocks, which could be joined together at a

⁴³ Tessa Murdoch, curator at V&A, personal communication February 2011

⁴⁴ *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, 31 January 1817, p4, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁴⁵ http://www.bedfordcharity.org.uk/aboutus/Our_history.aspx, accessed: 28 June 2012; Bed hangings, database 117, Collection of V&A, T. 242.f.1908; see also Prichard, *Quilts 1700-2010*, (2010), p.165

later stage, may be indicative of a co-operative needlework project and the use of fabric instead of paper templates could suggest an environment such as a charity school where paper to 'waste' for a sewing project was not available or affordable.

The material form of the majority of patchwork, which was owned, used and made by women from the lowest social ranks, cannot be confirmed because of a lack of surviving objects, but their lifestyles and likely, low disposable income can provide indicators to their possible look. Fashion works down through the social ranks so that plebeian women would be aware of developing tastes for specific textiles or needlework. None could aspire to make or own ornate decorative objects that required costly fabrics, sewing skills and time to stitch; working class women would not have the spare time or money and may have lacked the sewing skills.⁴⁶ However such women lived in a world of second-hand trade and it is very possible that some second-hand patchwork bedcovers were bought and used while still bearing some evidence to their former glory as meticulously-made, decorative objects.

The plebeian householder with limited time and money would stitch needlework, which was quick to sew, while ensuring that the use of a variety of fabrics with different colours or designs sewn 'interchangeably together' would still enable it to be described as a kind of patchwork according to Dr Johnson's definition.⁴⁷ It is suggested that the most basic type of patchwork would contain fabric pieces in sizes as large as could be obtained and would be sewn together at speed with little attention to planning and design (see Fig. 1).⁴⁸ This type is likely to be very similar to some surviving objects from twentieth century Ulster and Australia, also made in an environment of some financial hardship and social deprivation.⁴⁹ Such functional patchwork, which performed a role in providing a basic cover for a bed, allowed a lower-ranked woman to follow the fashion for patchwork that was present in the period.

⁴⁶ This topic is covered in more detail in Chapter 4 *Patchwork in the Domestic Context*

⁴⁷ S. Johnson, . *A Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are deduced from their Originals*, (London, 1755), Vol. II, p.291

⁴⁸ See a late-eighteenth century quilt database 160 which appears to be a rare survivor of this type, Collection of Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester T.2012.7

⁴⁹ For Ulster examples see V. Wilson, 'Introduction to Quilts and Clothing', in H. Purkis, and V. Wilson, *Fabrics & Fabrication: Traditional*, (Derry and Holywood, Northern Ireland: The Context Gallery and The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 2001), pp.20-33, see coat quilt UFTM 577.1976, p.23; tablecloth quilt UFTM 417.1978 p.29; pyjama and handkerchief quilt UFTM 879.1994, p.32; for examples of Australian waggas see 'The Fabric of the Wagga', in A. Gero, *The Fabric of Society: Australia's Quilt Heritage from Convicts Times to 1960*, (Sydney, Australia: The Beagle Press, 2008), pp.199- 231

It would be easier for plebeian women to take more care with stitching a smaller patchwork project which was less time-consuming. A fragment of a patchwork sewing case was left as an indentifying token with a child named Charles, but rechristened Benjamin Twirl, at the Foundling Hospital in 1767.⁵⁰ It is made from strips of printed and woven fabrics, but some attempt at embellishing the basic patchwork can be seen in the embroidered initials and heart worked in red thread (see Fig. 9).

Makers at the bottom of the social scale would have little choice when it came to selecting fabric for their patchwork and they probably ‘made-do’ by recycling textiles within the home or resorting to obtaining second-hand fabric or second-quality fabric remnants and fents. Detailed, decorative patchwork can only be made using the appropriate finer silks, linens and cottons, but the kind of patchwork that is suggested here, which was made of random, larger pieces, could contain a mix of all qualities of wool and worsted cloth as well as the thicker cottons and linens. Such basic patchwork, made from an un-designed jumble of many cloths, may have contributed to a negative attitude toward what was also a decorative needlework for women of higher social class. This may be important when considering the use of patchwork as a critical metaphor throughout the century, which is discussed in a later chapter (see Chapter 6).

Landladies such as Mary Blow, who lost ‘a piece of patchwork of my own working’ when her lodger removed items from her furnished room, would be aware of patchwork as fashionable needlework and may have concluded that patchwork bedcovers would be an attractive addition to their lodging rooms.⁵¹ However they would not have wished to spend too much time on making elaborate patchwork for their less well-off lodgers and may also have made patchwork of a similar basic kind.

Above this rudimentary level, lower-rank patchwork was likely to be the type seen in some surviving patchwork objects. They have a very simple design, often using large squares, triangles and rectangles set in a frame layout and stitched using the running or whip stitch method. Signs of the makers’ economic use of materials can be seen in the presence of unpicked seams on cloth that had been recycled and print errors and end-of-piece markings indicating the use of second quality fabrics (see Fig. 2). Such pieces may also be indicators of

⁵⁰ Foundling 16516, 11 February 1767, Foundling Hospital Billet Book, 1764-7, London Metropolitan Archives, A/FH/A/9/1/179, cited in J. Styles, *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens, 1740-1770*, (London: The Foundling Museum, 2010)

⁵¹ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, June 1815 trial of Elizabeth Green (t18150621-2). Accessed: 24 November 2008

patchwork practice lower down the social scale suggesting makers who had limited time for a testing needlework project and did not have the knowledge and skill to draft and work a complicated design, but who had put time and thought into how the pieces were placed and the fabric colours worked together.

Ann Cartwrite of Cresswell, Staffordshire made a frame design quilt in 1796 which, through its simple, inaccurately-worked layout, shows a lack of design and needle skills (see Fig. 46). The repetitive pious phrases which she embroidered in the centre suggest that, while not illiterate, she was not highly educated and perhaps extracted them from other pieces of needlework such as samplers:

Live to Love, Faith Hope and Charity, Love Joy and Peace, Duty Fear and Love,
We Owe to God Above.

Ann married a farmer, John Fielding, in July 1807 but it is uncertain whether he was a husbandman, or yeoman farmer working his own or a landlord's land at the subsistence or profitable level.⁵² Sarah Whinfield was a farmer's daughter from Ulpha, Cumbria and made a block patchwork coverlet, containing squares of various sizes, in 1810, but nothing is known about her social status.⁵³

Alice Webb, née Alfreed, began a quilt made from hexagons, which were set in a random design, in 1809 and completed it in 1816. Barnabas, her husband, was described as a journeyman weaver, but the family appear to have been sufficiently well-established to enable Alice to use the time-consuming, mosaic patchwork technique for her quilt, which also requires the availability of paper for the hexagon templates.⁵⁴

‘That Custom Got Among Ladies’: Patchwork for the Middling and Genteel⁵⁵

Although it is clear that references to patchwork can be found throughout the period, mention in personal documents is comparatively uncommon. While it is possible to find needlewomen who stitched patchwork, it is also remarkable by its absence from most of the more than twenty diaries, biographies and account books studied for this research. Elizabeth Freke did

⁵² CHR 63, British Quilt Heritage Project papers, The Quilt Museum and Gallery, York; Quilt database 69, Private owner

⁵³ Sarah Whinfield coverlet database 146, Private collection

⁵⁴ Quilt database 97, BQHP papers Han 1641

⁵⁵ J. Swift, *Directions to Servants in General*, (London, 1745), p.81

not appear to practice the craft and the only patchwork she had was a patchwork cushion.⁵⁶ Gertrude Savile never deviated from her obsession with ‘tent’, making tent-stitched chair seats and screens and only seems to have come across patchwork when she read *The Patchwork Screen* ‘after supper’ in 1729.⁵⁷ Sarah Hurst of Horsham spent her life in the middle of the century sewing for customers of her father’s shop and embarking on her own needlework projects. She records going to help her aunts, Mrs Wickers and Mrs Tasker, to quilt bedcovers, but does not mention patchwork in association with these quilts.⁵⁸

Mrs Philip Lybbe Powis had wide-ranging skills in needlework and related decorative crafts, but apparently not patchwork. However she was aware of the practice and its possible development through the period of her life. When she made a visit to Windsor Castle in 1780 to see the new canopied state bed that Queen Charlotte had installed, she inspected the embroidered hangings that were ‘fourteen years about making’ at Mrs Phoebe Wright’s ‘Royal School for embroidering females’ at Great Newport Street, London. She mentions one of the embroidery co-workers as Miss Hudson ‘who teaches the new patchwork in Bath’.⁵⁹

In the ten years of Anna Larpent’s detailed account of her daily life from 1790 to 1800, she described a large number of decorative and plain needlework projects. Among the lists of numerous cross-stitched carpets and chair seats, embroidered petticoats and gowns and fine muslin-work borders as well as plain-sewn shirts, shifts, tuckers, baby linen and handkerchiefs is only one mention of patchwork; in 1795 she ‘worked patchwork for a work bag’.⁶⁰

This section of the chapter examines evidence for patchwork furnishing in middling and genteel households using a variety of sources including inventories, newspapers and provenance details found with surviving objects. Together with extracts from a few diaries and biographies, the same sources provide more detail of women, in better social circumstances, who made patchwork. It concludes with a consideration of the status of patchwork as a domestic needlework technique.

⁵⁶ Carberry, *Mrs Elizabeth Freke*, (1913), p.112

⁵⁷ Savile, *Secret Comment*, (1997), p.157; Mrs Jane Barker in her novel *The Patchwork Screen* recommended patchwork to her female readers as a newly fashionable needlework and used it as a metaphor to describe the episodes in her heroine Galesia’s life see Mrs. J. Barker, *A Patch-Work Screen for the Ladies; or Love and Virtue*, (London, 1723);

⁵⁸ Djabri, *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst*, (2003), pp.70 and 143

⁵⁹ Climenson, *Passages from the Diaries*, (1899), p.203; The Royal School was established to train orphaned or impoverished daughters of professional men and was actively supported by the Queen. It re-located to Ampthill in Bedfordshire in 1809, <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/1141/armchair>, accessed: 9 March 2012

⁶⁰ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 1, 19 June 1795

One of the highest-valued inventory of losses from a London fire in April 1697 was Jane Cole's list of belongings, which totalled £556.15s.06d. She was one of the wealthier claimants listing some high-quality goods and furnishings including 'a silk pach work quilt for a bed and for a chuch(i)on 8 quisons'.⁶¹ Jane Cole's listing of a patchwork bedcover together with a reference to '1 patchwork Counterpain & 2 stooles on ye same', which were mentioned in a wealthy merchant tailor's Orphans' Court inventory of 1695, may be rarities in the early period of this study.⁶² However into the eighteenth century, the increasingly comfortable furnishings of middling and genteel houses included more patchwork bedcovers, curtains, cushions, chairs and stools alongside other fashionable wallpapers, drapes, pelmets, covers and cornices (see Fig. 47).

There are sufficient references to patchwork furnishings in wealthy houses throughout the period to show that the needlework was an appropriate choice for upper middling and genteel households. The probate inventory of William Allibone in Lutterworth, Leicestershire compiled in 1721 includes nine patchwork chairs valued at two pounds and ten shillings. This value for patchwork chairs is fairly substantial considering that his twelve cane chairs and two tables listed in the Great Parlour were worth only two shillings more.⁶³ A 1736 inventory mentions patchwork together with covers for the work 'A walnutttree Couch 2 squabs 4 pillows covered with patchwork & blew mohair & printed linen cases to d(itt)o' suggesting that the work was considered fine enough to merit protection when the furniture was not in use.⁶⁴

Ornate covers and hangings fashioned from silks and velvets with embroidered embellishments featured in the auction sale of the household effects of the late Robert Rogers esquire of Catton, near Norwich in 1783 including 'a Bedstead with carved Mahogany posts, and very rich and curious patch-work Furniture, comprised of Gold and Silver Embroidery,

⁶¹ Derby Court fire claim 1697, WJ/SP/D/015-071, London Metropolitan Archives Jane Cole: inventory of goods lost in the fire, October 1687; 'cuch' may be a couch bedstead or daybed with wooden sloping ends padded with cushions against which the user could recline and 'quisons' the cushions see P. Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration in England, France and Holland*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), p.172

⁶² Corporation of London Record Office, Orphans Court inventory 2513, Ralph Ingram, merchant tailor, cited in C. Browne, 'Making and using quilts in eighteenth-century Britain', in Prichard, *Quilts 1700-2010*, (2010), p.41, Browne has suggested that the term 'patchwork' here should be interpreted as a type of appliqué upholstery, but Thornton has described stools as both topped with a cushion and also as 'stuffed, covered with needlework or some other material' see Thornton, *Seventeenth-Century Interior Decoration*, (1978), pp.182-3

⁶³Records of the Perogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 3/20/34, William Allibone, 21 February 1721, The National Archives; I am grateful to Lynda Hill for this reference

⁶⁴ The 'Couch' was possible a simple couch or daybed; Records of the Perogative Court of Canterbury, PROB3/35/27, Henry Shelley, 20 March 1736, The National Archives, cited in Browne, 'Making and using quilts in eighteenth-century Britain', p.44

Velvet, Silk &c.’⁶⁵ A similar sale for the late Mrs. Ann Laverock of Walsingham, Norfolk in 1811 listed ‘two mahogany post bedsteads, with satin, silk, and velvet patchwork hangings, lined with lutestring, with window curtains to match, all in high preservation’.⁶⁶ Similarly an auction sale in 1816 mentioned patchwork ‘THE WARDROBE OF HOUSEHOLD LINEN, rich Silk, velvet and Damask Curtains, Cushions and Counterpanes, embroider and patchwork Quilts....Indian Curiosities of Exton Hall.’⁶⁷ Such luxurious patchwork would seem to reflect the furnishing style of the earlier part of the period and may have been in the older owners’ homes for some time having been acquired at the time of their marriage or inherited together with the house from a family ancestor. It is possible that they refer to items that were similar to the two patchwork objects considered to have been stitched in professional workshops, which were mentioned earlier in this chapter (see Figs 24 and 25).⁶⁸

One of these two objects is an ornate quilt with patterns worked in patchwork, appliqué and embroidery using silk velvets and high-status silks, some with silver and silver-gilt thread. Oral history suggests that the quilt was made for a manor house at Clyst St Mary, Devon, which was owned by a wealthy Exeter merchant. At the quilt top is an embroidered oval with arms suggesting a connection or desired connection to a high-status family, possibly the Bedford family who had owned the house until the mid-seventeenth century (see Fig. 24).⁶⁹

Toward the end of the century, Horace Walpole’s house at Strawberry Hill near Twickenham was furnished in the neo-gothic style with many items chosen to reflect Walpole’s connection with past family history. The red bedchamber featured crimson Norwich damask chairs and an arm chair of patchwork.⁷⁰

The growing contemporary taste for cotton and linen patchwork furnishings in the bedroom was observed in James Jefferies and Lady Fitzroy’s apartment at Hampton Court Palace in 1771. They had ‘Linen Patch-work Curtains to the Bed; a stuffed Cushion for a Window, covered with Patch-work, the same as the Bed;a Patch-work Counterpane, not quite finished making, the case for the Bolster being open; a small Curtain, Patch-work for

⁶⁵ *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 25 October 1783, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁶⁶ *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 25 May 1811, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁶⁷ *Leicester Journal*, Friday 19 April 1816, p1, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁶⁸ See quilt database 106, Collection of V&A T. 201-1984 see Prichard, *Quilts 1700-2010*, (2010), p.172 ; Coverlet fragment database 101, Collection of Colonial Williamsburg, Va., USA 2005-1-A

⁶⁹ Prichard, *Quilts 1700-2010*, (2010), p.172

⁷⁰ H. Walpole, *A Description of the Villa of Mr. Horace Walpole, Youngest Son of Sir Robert Walpole of Orford at Strawberry Hill near Twickenham*, (London, 1784), p.29

the Night Chest...'. Possibly the unfinished patchwork counterpane was Lady Fitzroy's latest needlework project.⁷¹

Beginning in 1800, Anna Margareta Brereton of Brinton Hall in Norfolk stitched a cotton patchwork bed cover and hangings for her bedroom and over the next five years completed nineteen pieces including cotton curtains, valances, head cloth, swags and cover (see Fig. 4).⁷² A document that accompanies another surviving, cotton patchwork bedcover, which was made between 1801 and 1816, indicates that the cover was originally part of an entire suite of bed hangings, bed cover and window curtains; the bed alone contained ten curtains and valances.⁷³

Into the nineteenth century, auction sales of the household furniture and effects of various deceased gentry continued to mention patchwork bedcovers and furnishing including 'a very handsome patch-work quilt' belonging to Captain Francis Thompson of the Parsonage House Mulbarton, Norfolk and a quilt 'very handsome patchwork 3 yards square and fringed' owned by James Scott esquire of the Great House, Sudbury, Suffolk.⁷⁴ The *Morning Chronicle* advertised the sale in 1812 of the late Mrs. McEvoy's goods from her well-established house in Upper Berkeley Street, off Portman Square in London, including 'a set of patch-work drawing-room curtains' and a year later a farm and household sale in Norfolk advertised 'post and tent bedsteads, with moreen, chintz and patchwork furnitures'.⁷⁵

In 1811, Mr Samuel Taylor held a sale of his household effects, including a patchwork quilt and cotton counterpanes, prior to changing his residence.⁷⁶ The probate inventory of John Fox from Huntingdon in 1817 revealed that he was an established upholsterer with extensive, well-stocked warehouses and workrooms and a comfortably furnished house. Two of his bedrooms contained a Marcella quilt in one and a patchwork quilt in the other.⁷⁷ The late Mr. Robert Blencowe's valuable household furniture and other effects, sold in 1818, included 'Witney Blankets, 12-quarter Marseilles counterpane, fancy

⁷¹ *Derby Mercury*, Friday 10 May 1771, p3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁷² Bed cover and hangings database 52, Collection of Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service, Costume and Textiles Study Centre, 1929.116

⁷³ Coverlet database 121, Collection of V&A T.632.1972; accession information

⁷⁴ *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 26 March 1803, p3; *The Ipswich Journal*, Saturday 22 September 1804, p.4, The British News Paper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁷⁵ *Morning Chronicle*, Monday 18 May 1812, p3; *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 25 September 1813, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁷⁶ *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 28 September 1811, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁷⁷ Probate records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, probate inventory John Fox, 27 January 1817

patchwork Coverlets &c.’⁷⁸ A household sale in Stamford in 1819 included a ‘handsome mahogany four-post bedstead with needle-work, patch-work, chintz, checked, and other furniture, lined throughout’.⁷⁹

Outside the period, the 1821 probate inventory of the late George Camber, a brewer of Buckden, Huntingdonshire, recorded property that he would have amassed earlier in his life. Among other items were a deal bedstead with cotton patchwork hangings in the best chamber and a four-post, elm wood bedstead in the second chamber with cotton patchwork hangings and patchwork quilt.⁸⁰

The popularity of patchwork is a narrative that runs throughout the century. From 1706, when Thomas Baker said that ‘Patchwork is Fashion of this Age’, onwards, there are references to middling and genteel makers and many examples of surviving objects that were clearly made as a leisure pursuit.⁸¹ Catherine Hutton was proud of her regular patchwork projects as were all who added a date together with their initials, if not their name, to their work. Needlework projects were frequently signed and dated in this period following the example set by sampler work. Henry Escricke’s letter to his clients, Wilson and Harrop, in 1738 also indicates that it was commonplace to have names included in the design of woven counterpanes (see Chapter 2).⁸²

Nearly eighty objects in the patchwork database had a date or initials/name connected to the work. The 1718 silk patchwork coverlet is the oldest dated example, although the identity of EH at the centre of the work is still uncertain (see Fig. 13). This coverlet is closely followed by the patchwork coverlet dated 1726 made by the unknown ‘I n’ (see Fig. 22).⁸³ However it is rare for the maker’s social status to be confirmed in these examples, although the husband of Sarah Moon Cadbury Cash, maker of a coverlet in around 1800 is recorded as being a silk mercer and Mrs Mary Lucas, née Hill, made a coverlet at the same time when living in Trosley rectory near Wrotham in Kent.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ *Northampton Mercury*, Saturday 10 October 1818, p1, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁷⁹ *Stamford Mercury*, Friday 21 May 1819, p2, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁸⁰ Probate records of the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon, probate inventory George Camber 1821

⁸¹ T. Baker, *Hampstead Heath*, (London, 1706), Prologue

⁸² For further detail on this reference see Chapter 2 page 86; A. P. Wadsworth, and J. Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Manchester 1600-1780*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931), p.266

⁸³ Coverlet database 102, collection of the McCord Museum of Canadian Life, Montreal, Canada, m 972.3.1

⁸⁴ Coverlet database 175, collection of the Henry Du Pont Winterthur museum, De, USA 1983.4 and coverlet database 90, BQHP papers Ead 623

Catharine Tebay was an unusual example of a needlewoman who saw a need to record the making of a patchwork coverlet to give to her daughter in 1817. Her patchwork design includes two plain calico hexagons with printed detail ‘This Piece of Patchwork, made by Catharine Tebay, for her Daughter, Mary Ann Tebay. Begun 14th March, 1816, Finished 3rd November 1817’ on one and ‘This Piece of Patchwork, was Finished Two Days Previous to the Death of H.R.H. the Princess Charlotte. Angels beheld her ripe for joy to come, Then called (by God’s command) their Sister home.’ on the other. Thought to have been born in 1768, Catharine appears to have lived in London after her marriage and, according to the Sun Fire Office records, was listed as a resident in Mount Street, off Grosvenor Square in 1821.⁸⁵

Another rector’s wife was associated with patchwork when William Cowper, poet and hymn writer (1731-1800) wrote a poem ‘To Mrs King On her kind present to the Author, A patchwork counterpane, Of her own making’ in 1790. Mrs King married Rev. John King, who was a contemporary of Cowper’s at Westminster school. She became an admirer of Cowper’s showering him and his companion Mrs Unwin with home-made gifts including what is actually an appliqué bedcover (see Fig. 26).⁸⁶

Reverend James Woodforde’s niece, Nancy, acted as his housekeeper for a number of years in his vicarage in Norfolk. He frequently bought patchwork pieces from the visiting salesmen for her and noted in 1798 ‘Mrs Custance with her Daughters made us a Morning Visit and stayed with us about 2 hours – they brought their Work with them. It was very friendly indeed of them...Miss Woodforde’s new patch-Work very much admired.’⁸⁷

The expectation that women of the period would acquire sewing skills in preparation for a future life as a wife, who could to run a well-ordered household or as a way to earn a living is considered in Chapter 4. Beyond the basic tasks of clothing a family, repairing household linen and furnishing a house, women from the higher social ranks had leisure time to fill and many of the surviving examples of eighteenth-century patchwork are testament to the hours that gentry and upper middling women spent at home with their needles. With time to plan and execute complicated needlework projects, such women were willing to commit months, if not years, to completing a piece of needlework. In the same way that Sarah Hurst

⁸⁵ A. B. Loscalzo, ‘Commemoration and Grief: Two Coverlets and the Death of Charlotte Augusta, Princess of Wales’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue 13, (2012), pp.38-59

⁸⁶ Database 231; N. Durbridge, *Cowper’s Counterpane*, (Olney, Bucks.: The Cowper and Newton Museum, 2010), available at http://www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/mw_counterpane.pdf accessed: 21 August 2012

⁸⁷ Wednesday March 28 1728, J. Beresford, *The Diary of a Country Parson: The Reverend James Woodforde*, Vol. V 1797-1802, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp.107-8

laboured over her catgut apron from September 1759 to March 1761 and Anna Larpent stitched her sister's embroidered petticoat from April 1792 to February 1794, did an anonymous needlewoman record that her suite of patchwork bed curtains, bed cover and window curtains took fifteen years to complete using 102148 cotton hexagon patches which measured one inch (2.5cms) along each side.⁸⁸ Belle Abram began her complex frame design of hexagons, stars and triangles in 1799 and did not finish the patchwork coverlet until 1808.⁸⁹ Catharine Tebay's patchwork project for her daughter took nearly twenty months to stitch before its completion in 1817.⁹⁰

The 1718 patchwork coverlet is thought to have come down through families of gentry farmers in north Wiltshire.⁹¹ It is made almost completely from silks with over 120 different designs, mostly plain or simple weaves but also some damasks and brocades containing metal strips of silver and are consistent with the social class of the family being relatively high status but not 'the best fabrics of the day'.⁹² The maker of the coverlet undertook a testing, time-consuming project to construct a mosaic patchwork design of square and rectangular blocks of varying sizes, from 11cms (4½ins) square upwards, containing geometric or figurative patterns including animals, birds and flowers. The evidence suggests that she was fully aware of the patchwork technique, confident in her sewing ability and had plenty of free leisure time to spend on the work. The papers still remain in the coverlet and research has revealed the time the maker spent designing the simpler geometric patterns by folding squares of paper and creating the more complicated geometric and figurative designs by drawing and in some cases, re-drafting on paper before it was cut apart to use as templates.⁹³ Some designs in the small blocks incorporate very small paper shapes, requiring skill to wrap with fabric and to manipulate whilst sewing.

⁸⁸ Djabri, *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst*, (2003), pp.111 and 197; Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 1, 30 April 1792, 14 February 1794; Coverlet database 121, Collection of V&A T.632.1972, accession information

⁸⁹ Coverlet database 140, Collection of the International Quilt Study Center and Museum, Lincoln, Ne, USA, 2007.029.0001

⁹⁰ Loscalzo, 'Commemoration and Grief', (2012), p.52

⁹¹ Coverlet database 59, Collection of The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles 2000-11-A

⁹² D. O'Connor, 'The Dress Show: A Study of the Fabrics in the 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 4/5, (2002/3), p.79

⁹³ K. N. Thompson, and M. Halliwell, 'An Initial Exploration of the Benefits of Using Transmitted Visible Light and Infrared Photography to Access Information Concealed within Multi-layered Textiles', *Scientific Analysis of Ancient and Historic Textiles*, Postprints of the first annual conference of the AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies, 13-15 July 2004, (2005), pp.177-184; K. N. Thompson, and M. Halliwell, 'Who Put the Text in Textiles? Deciphering Texts Hidden within a 1718 Coverlet: Documentation of Papers Hidden within an Early Eighteenth-century Coverlet using Transmitted Light Photography', *Textiles and Text*, Postprints of the Third Annual Conference of the AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textiles Studies 11-13 July 2006 (London: Archetype Press, 2007), pp.237-244; B.

By focusing on images of household pets, farmyard animals and varieties of game, the maker of the 1718 patchwork coverlet positioned herself within her home and her familiar countryside. In a similar way, the 1797 sundial coverlet reflects another needlewoman's life style and leisure activities in what Barber describes as 'a form of visual autobiography'.⁹⁴ The anonymous needlewoman, with initials 'm c b', surrounded a representation of a sundial set at 4 o'clock with images of her sewing tools; scissors, thimble, pincushion and sewing clamp. Included in the nearly three hundred geometric and figurative blocks are designs of birds and flowers together with fashionable personal and household accessories such as fans, playing cards, parasols, pole screens and urns (see Fig. 27). Another coverlet, dated 1799, shows a remarkably similar design layout containing an eclectic mix of images and this time the maker ensured that her efforts to represent her domestic life were recorded for all time by noting the number of patchwork pieces, 4306, alongside the date and her initials, 's p'. The sewing equipment that was so often in her hand appear alongside children's toys of cricket bat and ball, racket and shuttlecock and bow and arrow together with garden tools such as a spade, sickle and scythe.⁹⁵ Both coverlets contain patchwork maps depicting, amongst others, Scotland, England and Wales, the Americas and Africa. Alice Lonsdale commemorated her lifestyle, personal possessions and household ornaments in a coverlet made in 1810. However she chose an appliqué rather than a patchwork technique to create detailed images of her glove, pocket, hat, boot and shoe alongside representations of cutlery, crockery, urns, vases and furniture.⁹⁶

Jane Austen and her sister Cassandra were part of a genteel family, but lived with their mother in comparatively straitened circumstances. They made patchwork and corresponded about sourcing fabric for the projects in 1811 and one surviving patchwork coverlet has been attributed to the sisters' hands.⁹⁷ While there is some question whether Jane was involved in the making of this piece because the likely dating of the fabric places it

Long, 'Uncovering Hidden Marks on the 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 9 (2008), pp.62-83

⁹⁴ Coverlet dated 1797 database 113, Collection of V&A T.102-1938; J. Barber, 'Fabric as Evidence: Unravelling the Meaning of a Late Eighteenth Century Patchwork Coverlet', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 3, (2001), p.26

⁹⁵ Coverlet dated 1799 database 15, Private collection

⁹⁶ Alice Lonsdale coverlet database 167, EXR 3547 BQHP papers; coverlet now in the collection of the Royal Albert Museum, Exeter, Devon

⁹⁷ Jane to Cassandra Austen, Friday 31 May 1811, D. Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.191; Coverlet database 50, Collection of Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton, Alton, Hampshire

during her final illness or after her death, there is no doubt that the Austen sisters were stitching a kind of needlework which was apparently still acceptable and appropriate for their class at the period. They were perhaps following the example set by the Royal family in 1811 when Court officials chose to record that ‘During the late severe weather, the Queen has amused herself in making patch-work’ while the princesses ‘exercised their talents in paintings and etchings’.⁹⁸

The social status of governesses is as difficult to define more than two centuries later as it was during the period. Governesses were drawn from a level of society where women needed to support themselves by earning a living, but they were expected to have an education and a good grounding in the accomplishments which they would be required to pass on to their pupils. In the eventful life of Ellen Stock, née Weeton (1776-1849), were periods of time spent as a governess. When young, Ellen Weeton helped her mother run a school in Up Holland, Lancashire where a teaching assistant from the local boys’ school added to her knowledge of arithmetic, grammar and geography. She felt that contemporaries such the local clergy’s daughters considered themselves socially higher than the daughter of a schoolmistress.⁹⁹ Her journals and letters mention buying pieces of fabric for patchwork and in 1824 she sent to her daughter a piece of patchwork from a quilt made about twenty years before.¹⁰⁰ Anne Everitt Stilgoe (1780-1850) worked as governess for the Barnard Hankey family at Fetcham Park, Leatherhead, Surrey. In 1819 she made a patchwork and appliqué frame quilt, which has remained in the family of the descendants of John Barnard Hankey.¹⁰¹

It should be considered whether one reason for an absence of evidence of patchwork practice in so many sources is the possible informal status of patchwork within the home. As discussed further in Chapter 4, it would appear that patchwork was not included in school needlework curricula suggesting there may have been a perception that it did not have the same standing as fine embroidery, samplers, crewel work and filigree work. In general, patchwork techniques may only have passed on through the generations by family members within the home. This seems to be the case with Anna Green Winslow who was sent to school in colonial Boston from her home in Nova Scotia where her father was serving with the British army in 1770. She lived with her aunt and her diary sets out the life of an eleven year old girl while she was a day pupil at a Boston girls’ school. She also attended a sewing

⁹⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, 18 January 1811, p4, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed 9 May 2012

⁹⁹ Hall, , *Miss Weeton’s Journal of a Governess, Vol. 1* (1969), pp.14-6

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.325

¹⁰¹ Anne Everitt Stilgoe’s quilt database 75, Private collection

school learning plain sewing, embroidery and netting, but the piece of patchwork she exchanged with her school mate for a pair of curious lace mitts with blue flaps ‘had been wrought in my leisure intervals’. It is possible her patchwork was made outside the sewing school timetable.¹⁰²

Conclusion

Evidence to establish the makers and owners of patchwork in the eighteenth century is comparatively sparse, although the word patchwork was frequently employed both literally and figuratively at this time (see Chapter 6). While there are some references to commercial patchwork in the later period, it is suggested that patchwork was generally made in the domestic sphere. References in personal accounts are fairly uncommon begging the question whether patchwork did not have the same status as other needlework techniques so that, as a routine part of a woman’s sewing life, it was overlooked in edited diaries and reminiscences.

It is argued that the practical making and using patchwork in the long eighteenth century follows two separate narrative strands. Although patchwork was made by women from different social ranks during the same period, it would appear that there was a marked difference between the patchwork stitched or owned by upper and lower social classes. As discussed in Chapter 4, later writers recognised that there was a difference between the fashionable patchwork projects requiring good sewing skills and plenty of free time to execute, which were stitched by middling and genteel ladies and the quickly-made pieces of patchwork, which were made by women in more straitened circumstances. This difference is an important consideration when examining the use of patchwork in the figurative language of the period in a later chapter.

Patchwork was owned and made by women of lower rank, but was likely to be basic and utilitarian whilst still conforming to the definition of patchwork. Evidence from the recorded trials heard at the Old Bailey show that patchwork was stitched by ‘poor women’, servants, upholsterers, publican’s wives and lodging keepers although the value claimed for stolen patchwork objects rarely moved above five shillings (60 pence).

The few references available, together with examples of surviving patchwork objects across the period of research, suggest that patchwork remained a popular needlework among middling and gentry households. The complex, time-consuming nature of some of the

¹⁰² Earle, *Diary of Anna Green Winslow*, (1895), Project Gutenberg E book, accessed: 16 March 2012

patchwork projects is a testament to the number of leisure hours that women from higher social classes spent on their needlework when at home.

At the beginning of the period, wealthier households owned bedcovers and small furnishing items made from silk and velvet and ornately-worked silk patchwork was listed in probate sales though the century. By the middle of the period, the developing taste for using printed cottons and linens for furnishing was apparent given the survival of more cotton and linen patchwork objects and the evidence from records of stolen objects and later inventories.

Chapter 4 Patchwork in the Domestic Context

Anna Margareta Porter (1758-1832) was a well-educated woman who had travelled widely in Europe with her father, Sir James Porter, an eminent diplomat. In 1782 she married John Larpent, who acted as Examiner of Plays in the Lord Chamberlain's Office and she took over the management of her husband's households in Ashted, Surrey and Newman Street, London and the care of a young stepson. She brought her background, education, practical skills and outlook to the domestic sphere and undertook the standard household duties, which had been carried out by generations of women throughout the century. The female role as wife and mother was to act as a multi-skilled focus of the household using the experience that was passed on from female relatives and the domestic skills that were honed at home and school.¹

Larpent's domestic routine, maternal duties, sewing projects, religious practice and leisure pursuits were noted in a daily diary, which have survived from eight years after her marriage and continued on a regular basis until 1830. By recording the minutiae of domestic life and describing her attempts to negotiate time for her spiritual and intellectual well-being, her diary encompasses a variety of topics, which relate to a late eighteenth-century woman's role and her life at home. As such it provides a start point for the consideration of subjects that relate to patchwork practice in the domestic context.

As outlined in Chapter 3, patchwork was rooted within the domestic sphere whether it was made for a leisure pursuit or out of necessity. This chapter considers its connection to aspects of domestic life including needlework, household duties, girls' education, fashion and the print culture and will use Anna Larpent's records as a conduit through which such aspects can be examined throughout the century. Mrs Larpent's is the most comprehensive record of domestic life, but the chapter will draw on other female diarists and reminiscences from the period ranging from Dame Sarah Cowper who began a diary in 1700 to Catherine Hutton

¹ Anna Larpent's life has proved to be a rich source for research and the literature includes N. McKendrick, J. Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England*, (London: Europa Publ., 1982); J. Brewer, 'Anna Larpent: Representing the Reader', in J. Raven, N. Tadmor and H. Small, *The Practice and Representation of Reading in Britain: Essays in History and Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.227-45; A. M. Garry, "'After they went I worked": Mrs Larpent and her Needlework, 1790-1800', *Costume*, no. 39, (2005), pp.91-99; M. Morris, 'Negotiating Domesticity in the Journals of Anna Larpent', *Journal of Women's History*, vol. 22, no. 1, (2010), pp.85-106

who looked back over her life in the middle of the nineteenth century.² Such diaries and reminiscences provide insights into the domestic lifestyles of literate women in better social circumstances, but additional sources including Old Bailey court cases, newspapers, reports from charitable institutions and educational manuals supply further details covering women's lives across the social scale.

‘Received Mrs Webb, Miss Lake, Mrs Henry Dampier – much domestic conversation how faulty is female education. Young women are now too much neglected as to family duties.’³: Women’s Role at Home

In 1993, Vickery reviewed two separate historiographies that related to the debates surrounding firstly the suggested separate public and private spheres and how they relate to late eighteenth and nineteenth-century, middle-class women and also the perceived social and economic marginalisation of upper middling and gentry women in the early modern period.⁴ Over the last twenty years, further research and also the re-examination of contemporary letters and diaries have contributed to the discussion concerning women's roles and their

² Diaries include: D/EP/F29, Dame Sarah Cowper of Hertford diaries, Vol. 1, 1700-02, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies; H. Robertson, *The Life of Mrs Robertson Grand-Daughter of Charles II, Written by herself*, (Edinburgh, 1792); Rev. M. Pennington, *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Elizabeth Carter with a New edition of Her Poems*, (London, 1816); M. Robinson, *Memoirs of the Late Mrs. Robinson Written by Herself from the edition edited by her daughter*, (London, 1826); A. Thornton, *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton of East Newton, Co. York*, Surtees Society, Vol. 1834, (Durham: Andrew and Co., 1875); Mrs Fletcher, *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher with Letters and Other Family memorials, edited by the Survivor of her Family*, (Edinburgh: Edmouton and Douglas, 1875); Mrs. C. H. Beale, ed., *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman of the Last Century: Letters of Catherine Hutton*, (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1891); A. M. Earle, *Diary of Anna Green Winslow, A Boston School Girl of 1771*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Riverside Press, 1895), available at The Project Gutenberg eBook, www.gutenberg.org accessed: 12 March 2012; E. J. Climeson, *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon A.D. 1756 to 1808*, (London, 1899); F. J. Harvey Darton, ed., *The Life and Times of Mrs Sherwood (1775-1851) From the Diaries of Captain and Mrs Sherwood*, (London: Wells, Gardner, Darton and Co., 1910); M. Carberry, ed., *Mrs Elizabeth Freke Her Diary 1671-1714*, (Cork: Guy and Co., 1913); F. Paget Hett, ed., *The Memoirs of Susan Sibbald 1783-1812*, (London: The Bodley Head, 1926); C. Aspinall-Oglander, ed., *Admiral's Wife Being the life and letters of The Hon. Mrs. Edward Boscawen from 1719 to 1761*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940); E. Gillett, *Elizabeth Ham by Herself 1783-1820*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1945); E. Hall, ed., *Miss Weeton's Journal of a Governess*, 2 vols., (Devon: David and Charles Reprints, 1969); E. Mavor, *The Ladies of Llangollen: A Study in Romantic Friendship*, (London: Penguin Books, 1973); A. Henstock, *The Diary of Abigail Gawthorn of Nottingham 1751-1810*, Thoroton Society Record Series, Vol. XXXIII, (Nottingham: Thoroton Soc., 1980); A. Saville, ed., *Secret Comment: The Diaries of Gertrude Savile 1721-1757*, (Devon and Nottinghamshire: Kingsbridge History Society and the Thoroton Society, 1997); S. C. Djabri, *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst 1759-1762: Life and Love in Eighteenth century Horsham*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2003)

³ Larpent M1016/1, Vol. 1, 1 July 1793; Diaries of Anna Larpent 1790-1830 are held in the Huntington Library, California, USA, ref. HM 31201; Microfilm of the journals can be seen at the British Library M1016/1-7. In this chapter, the latter reference number will be used

⁴ A. Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 2, (1993), pp.383-414

position in society at this time.⁵ More recent work has concluded that the assumption that the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century was a key point in the history of women's changing role in society was misleading. Through her work on Lancashire merchant and gentry women, Vickery has suggested that the debates were far more complex and women worked, often unseen, as organisers, administrators and household managers, as well as some having active roles in trade and manufacturing.⁶

Since it would appear that there was no marked change in the content and amount of domestic work carried out by middling and gentry women between 1700 and 1800, it can be recognised that women throughout the eighteenth century had an expectation that the lot of running a household would fall to them. There was a growth in conduct literature aimed at women from the end of the seventeenth century such as *The Ladies Library*, but it has been suggested that the literature gave birth to a new attitude toward the 'domestic goddess', rather than marking the foundation of a new role for women.⁷

Dame Sarah Cowper of Hertford (1644-1720) certainly bemoaned her lack of status because of the loss of her position as household manager in her later married life. Isolated in her room where she read and meditated for many hours a day, she was subjected to the insolence of servants with no support from her husband 'Sir W' and her sons. 'No sooner out of Bed, but provk'd by a serv^t that did directly contrary to a positive command, so little is my authority in the family.'⁸ Dame Sarah understood that a wife should be in charge of the domestic routine. She felt aggrieved when her husband, who had custody of the linen, would not allow her sheets to put on Mrs Ash's bed when she visited and belittled when he rebuked her 'before serv^{ts} for giving my Neighbor a few Gilleflowers without his allowance'. She concluded that 'I can by no means be reckon'd m^{rs} [mistress] of the family'.⁹ To add insult,

⁵ The historiography includes A. Buck, 'Mantuumakers and Milliners: Women Making and Selling Clothes in Eighteenth Century Bedfordshire', *Bedfordshire Historical Miscellany: Essays in Honour of Patricia Bell*, (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society), Vol. 72, (1993), pp. 142-55; H. Barker, 'Women, Work and The Industrial Revolution: Female Involvement in the English Printing Trades c.1700-1840', in H. Barker, and E. Chalus, eds., *Gender in Eighteenth Century England*, (London: Longman, 1997), pp.81-100; A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); Djabri, *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst*, (2003); N. Phillips, *Women in Business*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2007); A. Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009)

⁶ Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, (1998),

⁷ Anon., *The Ladies Library*, (London, 1714); Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres', p.407

⁸ D/EP/F29, Dame Sarah Cowper of Hertford diaries, Vol. 1, p. 1, 29 July 1700, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

⁹ Dame Sarah Cowper, Vol. 1, p. 3-4, 8 and 12 August 1700, p. 16, 15 October 1700

she noted in her diary in January 1701 that she had read one of the conduct books that were aimed at women:

A Book coming in my way, wherein was contain'd the Duty of Wives, I read that particular and find I have discharged the Negative part punctually well, not being guilty of anything forbidden. As to some positives, such as Education of Children, governing the house and servants, I have not been in capacity to perform that well, the power being taken from me by him who should have invested me with it. Therefore upon y^e strictest scrutiny I am not guilty of the Neglect yet want the Comfortable Reflection that might arise from a more Compleat performance of the Duty.¹⁰

She continued to consider her position in relation to other wives and mothers in her circle and concluded that a woman had no power to stop her husband, 'who is supream', taking away her authority to be mistress of the house because a wife has by 'solemn contract...renounced her liberty'.¹¹

The loss of status within a genteel household affected Gertrude Savile in a similar way. She frequently recorded her powerlessness when faced with what she saw as the misbehaviour of servants in her brother's house and longed for a household of her own; a wish which she finally achieved following the receipt of a legacy, but her servant problems did not appear to go away at that point.¹²

As with many other late eighteenth-century women, Anna Larpent was familiar with the long list of household tasks and fully capable of the successful management of a home. A well-educated and intellectually-engaged woman, she learnt to negotiate her time between functioning as an industrious wife and mother and following her desires to read and learn more. But as Morris suggests 'Her dedication to family life did not relegate her to a separate sphere. She worked alongside her husband, pursued charitable enterprises and entertainments outside the home, and had unlimited access to books and company.'¹³

¹⁰ Ibid., Vol. 1, page 55, 28 January 1701

¹¹ Ibid., Vol. 1, page 194, 22 February 1702

¹² Saville, *Secret Comment*, (1997)

¹³ Morris, 'Negotiating Domesticity', (2010), p.100

Her commitment to household duties came from an evangelical Anglican outlook; she certainly favoured Hannah More's ideas on women's roles.¹⁴ She spent an evening reading More and was:

extremely pleased with this work on many points we think exactly alike... I most heartily hope this admirable work will check the present rage for ornamental Education & for artificial manners – which I cannot help lamenting as a means by which so many are rendered Useless in their Generation... How are these ends answered by which so many are rendered Useless in their Generation... How are these ends answered by learning to dress, sing, play, Dance. What Elderly woman is the better Mother or wife from these accomplishments.¹⁵

However she did not favour Maria Edgeworth's different political stance after spending May 1800 reading her *Practical Education*.¹⁶ Her comments on Edgeworth's chapter concerning female accomplishments were critical; 'The author by not touching on religious obligation & on the peculiar sanctity of female duties omits a most important motive in forming a female character.'¹⁷

Hers was not a passive acceptance of her lot. She used her diary to muse on the balance between running her household successfully and finding time to for social and intellectual activities and ascribed a feminine and 'manly' character to the two different sides of her life. Reporting on time spent mending her son's shirts when he was home from school she wrote 'I often smile to myself – one hour studying with the delights such pursuits give me – the next one Mrs Notable more eagerly patching up work.'¹⁸ A year later she described her day and re-examined the current balance in her life:

No journal 'till this morning – near a week has passed – what have been my employments. Chiefly work & that useful. I cut out 4 shirts for my Boys, & on Saturday I finished new making up my bed [she was re-furbishing her bedhangings] – which I have done Myself & really thoroughly employ'd me but it is a good & saving job. I settled some accts. & my weekly bills – I have read very little the Gentlemans'

¹⁴ H. More, *Strictures on the Modern State of Female Education*, (London, 1799)

¹⁵ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 3, 29 April 1799

¹⁶ M. Edgeworth, and R. L. Edgeworth *Essays on Practical Education*, 2nd Edition, (London, 1801)

¹⁷ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 3, 30 May 1800

¹⁸ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 15 April 1796

magazine through. I have in short quit my books & pen for this week because they interfered with my mechanical duties.¹⁹

The life of Mrs Elizabeth Carter was notable for her intellectual activities and her friendship with members of the Bluestocking circle, but her biographer was at pains to point out that ‘Amidst her severer studies, however, more feminine accomplishments were not neglected...she learnt also the common branches of needle-work, which she practised to the very last.’ Despite acquiring fluency in seven languages and studying astronomy and ancient geography:

she still found time to work a great deal at her needle, not only for herself, but also for the family; and this even when in London, for it appears from one of her father’s letters, that when one of her brothers had some new shirts, some of them were sent to her to make there.²⁰

Catherine Hutton was also aware of the different aspects of her life. Toward the end of her life she wrote a record of her life and occupations as a member of an upwardly mobile Birmingham family and set out her roles as her father’s housekeeper alongside lists of needlework projects, books, leisure pursuits and journeys around England.²¹ On one of her journeys, she wrote to her father from Scarborough saying ‘You would like to be here, you say; I should like it, too, and you would like the company; instead of hearing dissertations on caps and patchwork, you would join in the conversation of sensible, well-informed men.’²²

‘Nothing very material arose during this week....Cutting out Shirts & Shifts, Working Muslin, X Stitch, Knitting’²³: Needlework at Home

Middling and genteel girls could not avoid the pressure of learning to sew; it was a necessary skill that was required in order to prepare for a future role as wife and mother. Women would expect to spend many hours with their needle and, even if they were in the fortunate position to be able to employ housekeepers and sewing maids to do much of the making and repairing of textiles within the home, they would require the skill so that they could supervise their tasks and oversee a high quality of needlework. Aside from plain work of making and

¹⁹ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 5 February 1797

²⁰ Pennington, *Life of Elizabeth Carter*, (1816), pp.10, 25-6

²¹ Beale, *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman*, (1891), pp.213-4

²² *Ibid.*, p.148

²³ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 3, 19-25 January 1800

mending, women would use their needle for decorative projects stitching accessories and furnishings to embellish the home.

Eighteenth-century conduct literature provided many comments on the topic including Dr Gregory who, in his *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters*, did not necessarily regard needlework as an accomplishment. He belittled the skills acquired by stating that 'The intention of your being taught needle-work, knitting and such like, is not on account of the intrinsic value of all you can do with your hands, which is trifling, but to enable you to judge more perfectly of that kind of work, and to direct the execution of it in others.'²⁴

Anna Larpent constantly talked of the 'mechanical' nature of her needlework, which illustrates the hours she would have spent practising sewing skills as she was growing up. The enforced stints of needlework that all correctly-trained girls were subjected to were intended to embed sewing skills so deeply that the practice of needlework became instinctive. Only by achieving such an un-thinking level of skill could women stitch while they multi-tasked; socialising, overseeing their children's education or listening to others read. When her sons returned home from school at Christmas time in 1796, she wrote 'I was too happy to settle to anything. I worked & chatted & enjoyed the Society'²⁵

The foundation of the skills was laid at home and girls usually learnt to sew from her mother or female relative. In the late seventeenth century, Elizabeth Freke's father, a past Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, supervised the education of her and her sisters while her mother, assisted by her sister, taught the children '...fine needlework and stitchery of all kinds'.²⁶ More than eighty years later the routine was the same. Admiral Boscawen's wife sent news about family life whenever her husband was posted abroad and reported that her two daughters were regularly practising their needlework 'hemming pocket handkerchiefs' and sewing shifts and tablecloths 'less my damsels degenerate into idleness, which is the root of all evil'.²⁷ A motherless child may find a close family friend taking on the task of teaching her to sew; in the late 1770s, the school friend of Mrs Fletcher's dead mother stepped in to teach her to read and sew. She failed to pass many skills on to her pupil however and for Mrs Fletcher 'Plain work, indeed, was not her forte' and 'in the higher branches of the needle's doings she would gladly have taught her per pupil to excel. It was in vain, however, that

²⁴ Dr. Gregory, *A Fathers Legacy to His Daughters*, (London, 1792), p.86

²⁵ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 14 December 1796

²⁶ Carberry, *Mrs Elizabeth Freke*, (1913), Intro., p.1

²⁷ Aspinall-Oglander, *Admiral's Wife*, (1940), pp.188, 206

precepts were uttered by her on this matter, or that her goodly examples of cross-stitch, or tent stitch, reach even to hearth rugs and carpets in these kinds, were set before our mother.²⁸

A young girl learnt the handling of a needle and thread first and negotiated her first sampler where the counted-thread stitches of letters and numbers prepared her for the simple task of marking the household linen as well as grounding her in the world of reading. The basics of plain sewing were the running stitch and back stitch, which were used in seams and slip stitch and whip stitch which was used for attaching one fabric to another. A girl could only improve her technique and speed of sewing by practicing such stitches; inevitably she would be faced with long lengths of white linen or cotton which needed seaming into sheets, shifts or shirts. Mrs Trimmer in her *Easy Lessons for Young Children* suggested that girls should start sewing by making clothes for their dolls and, in a series of morality tales, used girls who stitched neatly and kept their work basket tidy as the embodiment of diligence and good behaviour. In one, Miss Emily Godfrey and her younger sister Julia helped make baby clothes for a 'poor woman' and said that they could not have done it unless they had made doll's clothes first.²⁹

Patchwork was an ideal project to practice stitching together pieces of cloth and the use of coloured, printed cloths would provide some relief from the endless lengths of white fabric. Anne Green Winslow, age eleven, describes making patchwork in her leisure time and may have taken the opportunity to practice the stitches that she learnt in her sewing school in colonial Boston in the 1770s.³⁰ Surviving patchwork bedcovers have been recorded as being made by girls including Elizabeth Jefferson age 11 in 1811 and Mary Coatsworth age 15 in 1817.³¹

Despite her involvement with her family, reading, religious observance, charitable work and social engagements, Mrs Larpent got through a prodigious amount of needlework although she noted 'how much rather would I have studied history or poetry'.³² Every Saturday, the household linen was gone through and items checked for damage and wear; those needing repair were handed to the female servants to sew and she stitched some items herself. A list of her personal linen in May 1799 outlined her plans to make two shifts, one

²⁸ Mrs Fletcher, *Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, (1875), pp.15-6

²⁹ S. Trimmer, *Easy Lessons for Young Children*, 6th edition, (London, 1807)

³⁰ Earle, *Diary of Anna Green Winslow*, (1895), available at The Project Gutenberg E book accessed: 16 March 2012

³¹ Patchwork object database quilt no. 85, collection of Manchester Museums, 1942.8; database no. 80, collection of The Bowes museum

³² Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 27 November 1797

night shift and one quilted petticoat and she was constantly cutting out and making shirts, in part, for Mr Larpent and her three sons. The shirt collars, cuffs and ruffles were always her task even if the main seaming of them was given to her servants or put out to seamstresses or girls in the charity school, which she and her sister set up near their home in Surrey.

The list of needlework, which she completed in July 1799, included:

Made 3 vallances for the eating room windows

Made 3 pocket handkerchiefs for John

Cut out 4 shirts for John. One for Mr Larpent

Made collars for the latter

Made a pair of mittens From a pair of gloves

Finished a hearth carpet in X Stitch – worked part of a gown for my sister – did much mending particularly Chair Covers old & worn which I patched into the pattern that they may be dyed.³³

The decorative needlework projects often took months to complete as she took up and put down other sewing that had more priority; one of the longest projects appears to have been her sister's petticoat which took nearly two years before its completion in February 1794 when 'worked all morning till one and finished my Sister's Coat wch certainly is very beautiful'.³⁴ The projects included cross stitch and tent stitch carpets, rugs and chair covers as well as delicately embroidered, often white-worked, dress borders and petticoats. The latter were kept to be worked in daylight hours whereas the cross and tent stitch projects could be managed in candlelight and were often stitched to the accompaniment of Mr Larpent reading aloud.

Anne Larpent did not list quilting among her sewing activities. Although she mentioned her plan to make a quilted petticoat in 1799, this may have referred to making a petticoat from yardage of machine-woven quilting, rather than hand quilting, since the fashion for hand-sewn petticoats to wear under open robes had passed by this time. She and her social contemporaries did not need to quilt; throughout the century, quilts and hand quilted petticoats were available from professional workshops, upholsterers or drapers and quilting could be bought in or carried out within the household by female servants. Quilting

³³ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, July 1799

³⁴ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 1, 14 February 1794

was not included in late eighteenth century school needlework curricula, which were aimed at the genteel and aspiring middling families. Jane and Cassandra Austen stitched patchwork in the early nineteenth century, but it is very unlikely that they knew how to quilt.

However earlier in the century, more women may have quilted. Copying the look of the expensive, imported, Marseille quilts, corded quilting was popular, although it was not combined with patchwork. Cord quilting supplies were available from London haberdashers.³⁵ Lady Grey stitched a large linen cord quilted bedcover at Howick Hall, Northumberland in the 1750s.³⁶ Catherine Hutton (1756-1846) looking back on her life said that ‘I have quilted counterpanes and chest covers in fine white linen, in various patterns of my own invention’.³⁷

In 1731 a disastrous fire in the centre of Blandford Forum, Dorset destroyed two thirds of the town including property of the major ‘Sufferers’, the brothers Thomas, John and William Bastard, joiners, cabinet-makers, undertakers, surveyors and sometime architects. Their claim to Sun Fire Insurance Company listed lost commercial and personal property including ‘one frame for working of quilts’, appropriate equipment for a business that provided furniture of all kinds.³⁸

Nearly sixty years later, another fire swept through Brandon, Suffolk in 1789. A relief fund was set up after the disaster and eleven households made claims ranging from householders such as the postmaster and surgeon, who were amongst the town’s wealthiest inhabitants, to various tradesmen, including a cordwainer, blacksmith and mantua-maker and servants who, due to the lack of furniture losses, were likely to be domestic live-in servants. The postmaster’s claim for £215.5s.3d (4,300 shillings and 3 pence) included a ‘large quilting frame’ valued at three shillings and six pence, but without indicating who quilted in a well-furnished, upper middling household. A small quilting frame was lost by a shopkeeper who

³⁵ C. Rose, ‘Quilting in Eighteenth-century London’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue2, (2000), p.25; C. Browne, ‘Making and Using Quilts in Eighteenth-century Britain’, in S. Prichard, *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*, (London: V&A, 2010), pp.34-8

³⁶ D. Osler, ‘A New ‘Frame’ of Reference’, *Calcutta*, Newsletter of the British Quilt Study Group, 27, (2010), p.2

³⁷ Beale, *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman*, (1891), p.213

³⁸ P. Legg, ‘The Bastards of Blandford: An Inventory of their Losses in the Fire of 1731’ *Furniture History*, Vol. 30, (1994), pp.15-42

carried a restricted amount of small stock including silk threads, hose and some fabric and, given the kind of stock it may well have been used for commercial purposes.³⁹

In the study of British eighteenth-century patchwork objects considered in an earlier chapter (see Chapter 1), seventy seven were patchwork quilts. Patchwork quilts were also among the stolen household items recorded in Old Bailey trials (see Chapter 2). However patchwork bedcovers from the second half of the century were generally recorded as being un-quilted or only single-layer covers, termed coverlets in this study. It would appear that they were intended to demonstrate the needlewomen's skill in showy pieces of decorative art without the warmth-giving layer provided in a quilt. Consideration should be given to whether quilting was a sewing skill that had gradually moved down the social scale during the century, so that patchwork quilts were indicative of either some professional input into their production or needlework from less elevated social circles.

Ellen Stock, née Weeton, disliked needlework saying that sewing occupied a small part of her day since 'It was never an amusement with me. I always consider it work'. However after her marriage to Aaron Stock in 1814, she understood her duties as a wife and wrote to her husband:

You required me to repair all your cloathing, excepting shoes...I disliked exceedingly patching britches, coats, waistcoats, and even neck kerchiefs, besides darning stockings up to the very knees; but to please you, I did it cheerfully.⁴⁰

Sarah Hurst (1736-1808) was described as an accomplished needlewoman. A member of a middling, merchant family in mid eighteenth century Horsham, Sarah sewed not only for pleasure, but to earn money while she helped her father in his tailor's shop. Her diary, which was written when she was in her twenties, detailed needlework of many kinds. This was not only challenging decorative projects such as her catgut apron, which took eighteen months to make, shirt ruffles, which she made for her future husband, Captain Henry Smith or quilting, which she did when helping her aunts, but also sewing that she took in from some selected

³⁹ FL 536/1/47: Brandon Parish, Brandon Fire, 'Estimation of the Goods and Chattles, Wearing Apparel, etc., destroyed and damaged by fire at Brandon in Suffolk on Thursday, 14 May 1789', Suffolk Record Office (Bury St Edmunds)

⁴⁰ Hall, *Miss Weeton's Journal*, Vol. 2, (1969), p.137

clients.⁴¹ For Sarah and others from the aspiring middle class, needlework was not necessarily just a leisure pursuit; it was a source of income as well.⁴²

‘Cut out 2 shirts for George – carried then to make at the School’: Learning to sew outside the home

Sewing skills were built upon should a child leave home to go to school. The century saw a gradual expansion of commercial day and boarding schools for girls and in all schools a core topic on the curriculum was plain and ornamental needlework. For most schools the curriculum was generally restricted to little more than reading and writing and accomplishments such as needlework and with some possible added extras such as music, drawing and French.⁴³ Parker in her study of the history of needlework followed the earlier writing on education and suggests that eighteenth-century women were held back by the need to achieve high standards in feminine arts and by the predominance of un-ambitious school curricula.⁴⁴

It was observed by Hannah Robertson (born 1724) ‘When I first entered life, education was judged of little consequence for a woman; in those days it was thought sufficient for a woman to acquire a knowledge of domestic economy and the use of her needle.’⁴⁵ The lack of ambition was accepted by Rev. George Woodward, who commented about his daughter’s education in the middle of the century ‘Binny [Albinia] goes to a Dame school; and as a specimen of her proficiency in that branch of learning, she is going to knit me a pair of garters.’⁴⁶ Elizabeth Ham remembers going to a similar school to learn ‘a dozen words in a spelling book...and sitting the remainder of the time on the form sewing’ and that

⁴¹ According to Florence Montgomery catgut was ‘An open linen or cotton fabric of plain weave in which the warp and weft are twisted and stiffened. It was used for embroidery.’ See F. Montgomery *Textiles in America 1650-1870*, (New York: W.W.Norton and Co., 1984), p.193; Catgut was apparently a popular fabric for embroidery. The *Lady’s Magazine* for January 1780 offered ‘A pattern for an Apron, to be worked in Catgut’

⁴² Djabri, *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst*, (2009)

⁴³ This was a theme highlighted in literature on girls’ education in the period such as N. Hans, *New Trends in Education in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: Routledge and Kegan, 1951); J. Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girl’s Education in English History*, (London: Methuen, 1965); R. O’Day, *Education and Society 1500-1800*, (London: Longman, 1982), pp.179-95; M. Bryant, *The London Experience of Secondary Education*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1986)

⁴⁴ R. Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the making of the feminine*, (London: The Women’s Press Limited, 1984),

⁴⁵ Robertson, *The Life of Mrs Robertson*, (1792), p.1

⁴⁶ D. Gibson, ed., *A Parson in the Vale of the White Horse: George Woodward’s Letters from East Hendred 1753-1761*, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publ., 1982), p.79, 5 November 1755

her later day school taught her nothing but reading, spelling and sewing. She noted that she left a third school because too much needlework was being taught.⁴⁷

It would seem that little more was expected if the stance adopted by a correspondent to *The Lady's Magazine* in September 1786 on the topic of education at girls' boarding schools was typical:

Sir.... With respect to their attainments, it is true that they do not acquire the knowledge of Latin and Greek, but they make those acquirements which are more suitable for their sex; the accomplishments of the needle, the pencil, music, dancing, the French, and what is more consequence to them, an accurate and grammatical knowledge of their own language.⁴⁸

Certainly many of the twenty five girls' schools founded before and after 1782 in Chester had a curriculum limited to domestic skills only.⁴⁹ Ellen Stock helped her mother run such a school in Lancashire after her father died in 1788 and said that she 'burned to learn Latin, French, the Arts, the Sciences, anything rather than the dog trot way of sewing, teaching, writing copies, and washing dishes every day.' She did have the benefit of some coaching from a male teaching assistant from the local boys' school who taught her 'writing, arithmetic, a little grammar and a little geography'.⁵⁰ However Skedd, in her study of the expansion of girls' schooling in the second half of the eighteenth-century, surveyed schools in Oxford and Oxfordshire and noted a general widening of a basic curriculum of reading and needlework to include lessons in grammar and literature, history, chronology, geography and the globes.⁵¹

Bermingham in her study of the polite art of drawing suggests that the need for female accomplishments was led by the belief that women were intellectually and emotionally different, being passive, mothering and intuitive and as such should be taught a different set of subjects.⁵² Girls' schools for the gentry and aspiring middling classes promoted their

⁴⁷ Gillet, *Elizabeth Ham*, (1940), pp.24, 36

⁴⁸ *The Lady's Magazine; or, Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex, appropriated solely to their Use and Amusement*, September 1786, p.405

⁴⁹ D. Robson, 'Some Aspects of Education in Cheshire in the Eighteenth Century', in *Chetham Society* (1966), pp.78-79, cited in O'Day, *Education and Society*, (1982), p.189

⁵⁰ Hall, *Miss Weeton's Journal*, Vol. 1, (1969), pp.13-4

⁵¹ S. Skedd, 'Women Teachers and the expansion of girls schooling in England 1760-1820' in Barker and Chalus. *Gender in Eighteenth Century England*, (1997), p.121

⁵² A. Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000)

superiority by advertising a whole range of useful and ornamental needlework associating such sewing with other accomplishments such as drawing, music and dancing. Mrs Bolingbroke used her local newspaper to publicise the opening of her new boarding and day school for girls in Norfolk in 1785 ‘where the strictest Attention shall be paid to their mental Improvement’ and emphasised that ‘Fruit and Flowers in Cloth-work, Embroidery, Tambour and every other Branch of Needle-work’ would be ‘carefully taught’. ‘Dancing, Writing &c. by proper Masters’ was added to the advertisement as an apparent afterthought.⁵³

Truro appears to have been a popular town for girls’ boarding schools at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. Map samplers have been recorded as being made in the 1780s at Miss Warren’s school, which was still running in 1798. Miss Wise ran a school on the quay in the town in 1811 and Miss Lane advertised the fees for her school including ‘English Instruction, Plain-Work, Tambour &c. per annum 2.2.0 [forty two shillings]’ and ‘Embroidery, Filligree, Cloth-Work, and Flowers each 0.10.6 [ten shillings and sixpence]’.⁵⁴

The success of such schools in promoting decorative needlework can be assessed by noting the survival of ornate samplers and embroidered pictures that record either the school where they were made or the teacher who passed on needlework skills to the young maker.⁵⁵ The embroideries were frequently challenging designs that may have been intended as a final piece to mark the skills achieved by a pupil during her school career and were made using expensive materials, often a printed or hand-drawn silk or linen background and costly silk floss threads, which would have been billed as additional costs to the basic school fee.

Vickery highlighted the ‘bubbling debate’ concerning the acquisition of useful and ornamental accomplishments that raged throughout the late eighteenth century and suggests that the intricate embroidery stitched at school and proudly displayed at home, was regarded in some quarters as indicative of middle-class pretensions and a wasted opportunity to improve women’s position in society. However she argues that we should look beyond this

⁵³ *Norfolk Chronicle*, 9 July 1785, p3, The British Newspaper Archive, <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁵⁴ J. Jarett, S. Jarett and R. Scott, *Samplers- Mapped and Charted*, (Witney, Oxfordshire: Witney Antiques, 2005)

⁵⁵ For examples from schools in Ashford, Kent; Truro, Cornwall; Tottenham, London, see Jarett, Jarett, and Scott, *Samplers- Mapped and Charted*, (2005); for examples with acknowledgement of needlework teachers see J. Jarett, S. Jarett and R. Scott, ‘On This Fair Sampler Does My Needle Write’: *Samplers and Historic Embroideries*, (Witney, Oxfordshire: Witney Antiques, 2004), pp.35-6

debate and undertake an overdue reassessment of female handicraft, including needlework, due to its central position in Georgian culture.⁵⁶

Whether taught at home or school, the accomplished middling or genteel needlewoman possessed all the plain sewing skills as well as a variety of decorative techniques in order to manage a household, beautify her home and fill her leisure hours. For women lower down the social scale needle skills may have been harder to acquire, but vital in order to eke out a living in the textile trades or find a position as a higher-status servant such as a waiting (ladies) maid or nursery maid. However, as the variable quality of the stitched textile tokens attached to the Foundling Hospital billet books between 1740 and 1770 demonstrate, not all women in London appear to have been skilled seamstresses. Styles suggests that needle skills were not necessarily taught to or acquired by every woman at this time and that in country areas, in particular, girls were taught spinning and knitting instead of sewing in order to improve their chances of employment.⁵⁷

Drawing on contemporary reports as well as previous authors, Muldrew has estimated the degree to which women of the period were continuously employed in spinning wool and linen threads for the textile industries and proposes that ‘spinning was by far the largest industrial occupation in early modern England’. He concludes that employment in spinning increased rapidly from the late seventeenth century as woollen, worsted and linen production grew to supply an increasing home demand and an expanding export trade. His estimates show that, by the 1770s, the potential employment of spinners of wool, linen and hemp, ‘could have been in the order of one million and five hundred thousand married women’. If this figure was added to the calculated, one hundred thousand employed in hand-knitting stockings, he suggests that the two trades would have provided employment for about seventy five percent of all women. These figures do not include the numbers of children employed in preparing fibres for spinning or make allowance for the fact that un-married women were able to work more hours in the week than married women with families to care for. His suggestion that the demand for spun thread would have dominated in rural textile-producing

⁵⁶ Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009), pp.231-5

⁵⁷ J. Styles, *Threads of Feeling: The London Foundling Hospital's Textile Tokens, 1740-1770*, (London: The Foundling Museum, 2010), pp.57-61

areas such as East Anglia, the Weald of Kent, the South West and later Lancashire and Yorkshire, at the expense of other activities, seems very likely.⁵⁸

Earnings would vary depending upon the degree of skill required for spinning the various threads, but Muldrew suggests that they could contribute over thirty percent of household income for poorer families and any fluctuating demands for cloth exports would have a drastic effect on the budgets of rural plebeian households. In such areas, there was little demand for sewing skills apart from limited opportunities for employment in service and the priority would be to ensure that girls acquire a competence in spinning in order to contribute to the family income.

In his *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry*, Rev. David Davies detailed the results of his examination of the earnings and expenditure of labouring families in and around his living in Berkshire. He examined the income generated by spinning and its significant contribution to the household budget in some families. Describing one family with two daughters, aged seven and five, he said ‘the wife was taught by her mother to read and spin and she teaches her girls the same’. On days when she has no household duties ‘she sits closely to her wheel the whole day, she can spin 2 pounds of coarse flax for ordinary sheeting...the eldest girl can earn 2d (2 pence) per day spinning near 1 pound of such flax...The little girl age five can also spin adroitly; she goes to the wheel when her sister is otherwise employed.’⁵⁹

His survey highlighted the fact that the poor families were ‘very meanly clothed’. Single persons may have gone into a marriage with an adequate set of clothing, but, after years of wear and lack of money to buy replacements, the clothes would soon become ragged. He appears to imply an overall lack of sewing skills since, when the clothes need mending, ‘then the women spend as much time in tacking their tatters together, as would serve for manufacturing new clothing, had they the skill to do it, and the materials to do it with’.⁶⁰

However urban dwellers recognised that trained needlewomen were needed to meet the demand from milliners, mantua makers, embroiderers, quilters, upholsterers and the ready-made trade and satisfy the requirements of the growing number of middling and

⁵⁸C. Muldrew, ‘Th’ancient Distaff’ and ‘Whirling Spindle’: Measuring the Contribution of Spinning to Household Earnings and the National Economy in England, 1550-1770’, *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 65, 2, (2012), pp.498-526

⁵⁹ Rev. D. Davies, *The Case of Labourers in Husbandry*, (Bath, 1795), p.85

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.28

genteel households. In his survey of the metropolitan female labour market, Earle drew on depositions placed before the London church courts between 1695 and 1725 and found that twenty percent of women in London were employed in the sewing trades ‘making and mending clothes’; the second highest source of employment after domestic service. Just over twenty five percent of the women surveyed were described as domestic servants with a further eleven percent employed to do cleaning and laundering.⁶¹ The findings for London were probably unsurprising given its position as the premier manufacturing and retailing centre in Britain, but, over the century, the growing demands of consumers outside London saw other urban centres develop communities of seamstresses in order to satisfy the local need for clothing and furnishings alongside the continuing demand for servants. When investigating women who made and sold clothes in Bedfordshire, Buck noted a growing number of mantua makers over the century and found that girls were apprenticed to twenty three different mantua makers in the town of Bedford during a nine-year period between 1763 and 1772.⁶²

Recent research into the working lives of eighteenth-century needlewomen considered the sewing techniques that women needed to have mastered in order to be employed in the garment trade. The study of sixty dresses and women’s jackets from the period identified a specific repertoire of stitches, including running, slip, back and whip stitch, which were used to make all of the garments. Notably the original needlework was judged to be skilful; later repairs and alterations were more clumsily done. Dowdell observed:

I believe that close examination of a range of artefacts dispels long-held assumptions that mantua makers and other needlewomen were universally untrained or possessed inferior skills to those of male tailors... looking at original construction one continually finds carefully executed work with consistent threads and stitching techniques.⁶³

Hannah Woolley wrote early books on household management in the second half of the seventeenth century and her *The Compleat Servant-Maid*, providing guidance for female servants, continued to be published into the eighteenth century. She told chamber maids to

⁶¹ P. Earle, ‘The Female Labour-Market in London in the late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries’, *Economic History Review*, New Series, 42, no. 3, (1989), pp.328-52

⁶² A. Buck, ‘Mantua makers and Milliners: Women Making and Selling Clothes in Eighteenth Century Bedfordshire’, *Bedfordshire Historical Miscellany: Essays in Honour of Patricia Bell*, Vol. 72, (1993), pp.142-155

⁶³ C. Dowdell, *The Fruits of Nimble Fingers: Garment Construction and the Working Lives of Eighteenth-century English Needlewomen*, unpublished MA thesis University of Alberta, Canada, (2010), pp.68-71, p.73

learn to wash and starch fine linen and lace as well as mending them neatly and, should their employer be a gentlewoman, they must also have the skills to ‘Work all sorts of Needlework, and Plain Work’. Her directions for laundry maids who worked for the elite included having to ‘take care that all the bracks and rents in the Linen be duly mended’ after it was laundered.⁶⁴

This acknowledged need for skilled needlewomen in urban areas coincided with the growing debates about how the country should cope with the poor and whether training for useful work was the solution, which were first been aired in the late seventeenth century by authors such as John Bellers, Samuel Hartlib and Thomas Firmin.⁶⁵ In the introduction to his edited version of the complaint book compiled by the steward of the Quaker workhouse in Clerkenwell between 1711 and 1737, Hitchcock highlighted these contemporary concerns about the dependence of the rich upon the larger population of the poor while examining the broader history of workhouse care for the poor.⁶⁶

From the late seventeenth century, institutions were established to provide work for the able, training for the young and relief for the infirm and the inmates were regularly employed picking oakum, carding wool, spinning flax and wool and winding thread. While spinning was a priority for women, sewing does feature in some records however; as early as 1634 the Red Maid’s Hospital was founded to teach forty orphaned or destitute daughters of freemen or burgesses of the city of Bristol to read and sew.⁶⁷

The Clerkenwell workhouse was established in 1702 and cared for about one hundred elderly people and children supported by Friends from their Monthly Meetings. Richard Hutton took over as Steward in 1711 after the institution experienced some financial and administrative problems. The main industry appears to be spinning, but entries in his complaints book in 1716 describe girls sewing in the summer from after breakfast until dinner and through until the evening and in the winter alternating between writing and sewing in the morning and sewing all afternoon under the supervision of the school mistress.

⁶⁴ H. Woolley, *The Compleat Servant-Maid: or, The Young Maiden’s Tutor*, 7th edition, (London, 1704), pp.56-7, 125

⁶⁵ A comprehensive examination of seventeenth and eighteenth century attitude to relief is provided by J. Innes, ‘The “mixed economy of welfare” in Early Modern England: Assessments of the Options from Hale to Malthus (c. 1683-1803)’, in M. Daunton, ed. *Charity, Self Interest and Welfare in the English Past*, (London: University College Press, 1996), pp.139-80

⁶⁶ T. Hitchcock, T. ed., ‘Introduction’, *Richard Hutton’s Complaints book: The Notebook of the Steward of the Quaker Workhouse at Clerkenwell, 1711-1737* (1987), pp. VII-XXIII URL, available at : <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39816> accessed: 04 June 2013

⁶⁷ <http://www.redmaids.bristol.sch.uk> , accessed: 4 June 2013

There was regular discussion about whether the income from sewing would cover the expenses of a mistress, particularly while the girls were learning needlework:

And if the house has the profit of the children's sewing work &c it may be questioned whether it will pay a mistress's board and wages, buy thread, needles, samplers, silk-worsted &c for some considerable time while the children are all of them unlearned.

We propose no profit by letting the school mistress have the children's work, yet we have hope if the house is encouraged by sending in linen &c, in time the children may be brought to something to some profit. And it is our opinion it would be more reputable and may prove more profitable to give the school mistress a salary, also thereby the improvement of the children may be more easily seen, their earnings necessarily coming into the accounts.⁶⁸

Hutton felt strongly that any losses to the workhouse from the sewing activities were offset by the advantage of training girls for their likely future careers. He said that they usually come at about eight years old and stay until they are thirteen or fourteen and alongside their needlework, learn to read, write and cipher, but was concerned that the latter education may raise their ambitions beyond being in service to working as a shop keeper or seamstress:

We have not hitherto much disputed the charge and considerable loss the sewing school has been to the house (for near 5 years) in taking up the whole of the girls' time, which they have worked for so small earnings. Yet with you we esteem it necessary that they should have some education of this nature, though we conclude it has not yet so fully as could be desired answered the good intent therein proposed by you, to wit, a more thorough qualification for good servants.⁶⁹

A number of charity schools for girls were set up during the century by wealthy benefactors or religious groups who wished to provide girls with training for employment and to ensure that they lived in a sound, moral environment. Alongside the lessons in reading and domestic techniques, many such schools also expected the girls to work at spinning wool or flax, taking in needlework as well as knitting or sewing items for sale in order to help fund

⁶⁸ Richard Hutton's Complaints Book: 1716 (nos. 13-37), *Richard Hutton's Complaints book*, pp. 10-21, accessed: 4 June 2013

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*: 1720-22 (nos. 102-109), *Richard Hutton's Complaints book*, pp. 65-72. accessed: 04 June 2013

the establishment.⁷⁰ The Grey Coat School was such an institution, established in York in 1705 by an organising committee who desired a wholesome and pious education for the twenty girls who were lodged, fed, clothed and taught to write, sew, knit and spin worsted on the premises. The aim to provide education and training through apprenticeships for the girls, although not entirely successful, enabled a regular flow of skilled girls onto the local jobs market.⁷¹

The founding committee of the Blue Coats School in Ipswich prepared a list of requirements for the employment of a schoolmistress in 1709 including the need to be:

of good life and Character above the age of Thirty Years one whose Affection has been constantly to ye Worship and Communion of ye Church of England as by Law established Who can Read well, of Prudence to manage youth, and of competent Knowledge in the Principles of ye Christian religion...And also a good Workwoman that she may Teach scholars the Use of their Needles in all Necessary and useful housewifely sorts of plain work, & knitting.⁷²

Distressed by the sight of destitute and dying babies on the streets of London, Thomas Coram campaigned for seventeen years to find a home for such children before the Foundling Hospital was established by Royal Charter in 1739. From 1741, limited numbers of young infants and babies were admitted to the care of the Hospital where they were clothed, fed and trained for their future working life. In the case of the girls, it was soon decided that they should undertake domestic work, sewing and spinning and later committee decisions in the 1760s resolved that girls should ‘be instructed to read, to learn plain work, spin & knit’ and taught to make and mend their own clothes.⁷³ Plain needlework was also taken in and the income from such work was recorded in the annual accounts. In 1799, the Treasurer of the Hospital reported that ‘There is a considerable quantity of needlework taken in, and done for hire, at the Hospital; besides all the linen and female attire of the children, whether in the house or at nurse.’ and the average annual ‘produce’ of the work done by girls aged eleven to

⁷⁰ The growth in subscription charities, in particular schools and hospitals, is examined in Innes, ‘The “mixed economy of welfare”’, (1996), pp.153-62

⁷¹ W. B. Taylor, *Blue Coat Grey Coat: The Blue & Grey Coat Schools and St Stephen’s Home of York 1705-1983*, (York: Sessions Book Trust, 1997), pp.47-51

⁷² Edgar Family Papers, HA247/6/2-3, Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich, cited in R. Scott, *Samplers*, (Oxford: Shire Books, 2012), p.73

⁷³ R. H. Nichols and F. A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp.130, 138

fourteen was fifty three shillings. A year later the total proceeds from girls' work was one hundred and seventy four pounds, fifteen shillings and six pence.⁷⁴

The Asylum or House of Refuge for Orphans and Other Deserted Girls of the Poor was established in Lambeth in 1758 by a number of concerned London residents, including Sir John Fielding who acted as one of the Asylum's first Guardians. The Asylum fed, housed and clothed the girls aged between eight and twelve and trained them in the basic skills of domestic service. At the third committee meeting, the Guardians agreed to advertise for a matron, cook, kitchen gardener and plain work teacher who 'It is expected...should be perfect Mistress of her Needle as to common Work and be well qualified to superintend and direct the Children in their knitting, cutting out, making, marking and getting up linen; and she must also be able to teach them to read.'⁷⁵ Notably this would suggest that the girls at this institution were not expected to spin and instead were being trained for household service or the textile trades.

Founded in 1778 in the buildings of the old Yorkshire Foundling Hospital, Ackworth School was established after the decision was taken by the London Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends to establish boarding schools for the children of Quaker families 'not in affluence'. Ackworth began as a school for the children of the Quaker poor where the majority would receive training befitting those who would go into apprenticeship or domestic service, but by the end of the eighteenth century, children from more prosperous Quaker families also attended. All were taught the same curriculum 'that the English language, writing and arithmetic be carefully taught to both sexes; and that the girls be also instructed in housewifery and useful needlework' and it was recorded that spinning, knitting and sewing occupied much of the day.⁷⁶

During the same period, Robert Heaton, a West Yorkshire worsted manufacturer based near Haworth, recorded the wages earned and the expenses incurred at local tradesmen by his live-in female servants in his account book. Clothing purchases were a significant part of their annual expenditure and, frequently, cloth for new garments were bought with the costs set against their yearly wage. While it would appear that the fabric for outer garments

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.148

⁷⁵ Minutes and Records of the Guardians, Asylum or House of Refuge for Orphans and Other Deserted Girls of the Poor, Wednesday 17 May 1758, UPenn, Ms, Codex 1623, http://dla.library.upenn.edu/dla/medren/detail.html?id=MEDREN_5456346, accessed: 13 June 2012

⁷⁶ C. Humphrey, *Quaker School Girls Samplers from Ackworth*, (Needleprint & Ackworth School Estates Ltd., 2006)

such as gowns and cloaks would have been made up by local mantua makers, the entries outline regular purchases of cheaper fabrics for shifts, aprons, caps and handkerchiefs as well as thread suggesting that they made such undergarments and accessories. Hannah Holmes came to work for Heaton in April 1770 and in August later the same year he paid out three shillings ten pence (0.3s.10d) on her behalf 'for a shift cloth and for lawn for a cap and thread'. Martha Greenwood joined the household in 1774 and paid, through Heaton, five shillings and sixpence (0.5s.6d) for 'shifts and thread' and, four years later after Mary Pighells came to live at the house, she obtained 'new cloth for shifts mending' for one shilling (0.1s.0d). Mary Greenwood was taken on as a servant in late 1787 and, during the following year, Heaton outlaid three shillings and one and a half pence (0.3s.1½d) for 'a shift and thread'.

From 1764 to 1792, numerous young female servants were hired by Heaton, drawn from the families of local laboring poor. Styles suggested that they performed basic household tasks appropriate for maids-of-all-work together with some textile production and over the period were paid an average of fifty nine shillings (59s.0d) a year, generally less than paid to maids in gentry homes in the area. Throughout this time, the regular entries of thread for making or mending may indicate that some of the female domestic workforce around his home in the north west Yorkshire textile belt had acquired basic sewing skills sufficient for the making of simple garments and accessories.⁷⁷

The growing concern about the physical and moral conditions of poor continued to be widely debated by authors toward the end of the century and there was a strong movement in favour of encouraging self-reliance exemplified by Sarah Trimmer's *The Oeconomy of Charity*. Trimmer felt that people had pre-ordained stations in life and the poor, whose duties were 'honesty, diligence, humility and gratitude', should be assisted to improve their lot not only through the Parish relief system but also by private benefaction. She suggested that the education of poor children should not be left to 'their ignorant and corrupted parents', but should be sponsored by 'ladies of ranks' and overseen by 'ladies in middling stations'. By supporting the continued growth of Sunday schools and advocating the establishment of 'Schools of Industry', she joined the widening ranks of those who saw that the poor needed to

⁷⁷ B144-9, Heaton of Ponden MSS, account books of Robert Heaton, 1764-92, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford; see also J. Styles, *The Dress of the People Everyday Fashion in Eighteenth-century England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), Chapter 17, pp.277-301

be better equipped for their role in life as well as training up the next generation of workers so that ‘the rising generation of poor are instructed by us, that our children may be better served than their parents have been’.⁷⁸

The main product of her proposed ‘manufactories’ was to be spun linen and woollen thread and knitted stockings. However she suggested that girls should receive training in the three skills of spinning, knitting and plain sewing, although the priority was given to the first two so they could continue to spin and knit at home. She cited the example of a school, which had been running since 1773, where twelve girls were doing plain work alongside spinners and knitters. The income generated from the girls’ output was offset against expenses and the girls received rewards for their efforts such as clothing or ‘a work-bag, hus-wife and pincushion, made by young ladies, also a thimble and scissars’ which would be ‘great encouragement to them’.⁷⁹

Influenced by such contemporary thinking, Anna Larpent and her sister Clara had set up a school in Surrey in 1787 ‘with the hope of doing good for 8 girls’.⁸⁰ They were supporters of other schools of industry visiting one in Edgeware Row in London to which they ‘belong’.⁸¹ They appear to have adopted Trimmer’s principles of providing rewards ‘to promote industry’ and Larpent noted annual Sunday School dinners in January when girls who ‘behaved well’ received rewards including clothing, housewives and common work bags. In January 1792 they provided items, some home-made, ‘7 who are of our weekly school had warm petticoats, 12 had shifts, 8 had bibs & aprons - 2 has stockings - & one a farmer’s daughter a cap’.⁸²

The school concentrating mainly on spinning, but plain work also featured and work was taken in; Anna cut out shirts to be made up by the girls. The sisters visited regularly whenever they were at their country house in Surrey to monitor progress and to examine the quality of the needlework and spinning. They were closely involved with the running of the school and it was with some sadness that Larpent recorded at the end of 1796 that they were forced to close the school down ‘very great expense was the cause but the building of a house

⁷⁸ S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or an Address to Ladies Concerning Sunday-Schools; the Establishment of Schools of Industry under Female Inspection; And the Distribution of Voluntary Benefactions*, (Dublin, 1787), pp.3-26

⁷⁹ Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity*, (1787), pp.75-9

⁸⁰ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, end of December 1796

⁸¹ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 1, 24 April 1794

⁸² Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 1, 2-10 January 1790, 22 January 1792

of industry in the Parish has taken some of the girls. And some families would rather the girls went out to work.’⁸³

Catherine Cappe and a committee of ladies in York were also encouraged to act on similar principles after the discovery of the bad working conditions in a sack factory in the city, which employed sixty boys and girls. In 1782, Mrs Cappe and Mrs Gray set up a school for twenty two girls to learn to read, knit and sew, but re-established it a year later as a School for the Spinning of Worsted so that girls who attended could receive a wage and by 1784, eighteen girls from the sack factory joined the School. A knitting school was added for younger girls and they moved up to spinning when a vacancy arose. Cappe recorded that they were decently clothed as well as receiving one quarter of the income from their spinning and ‘They make their own clothes, which is a further advantage, as by that means they receive some instruction in sewing from the Knitting Mistress, who has two of the Spinners constantly for a month in rotation under her care for the purpose.’⁸⁴

The success of the spinning school came to the attention of the Board of the Grey Coat School in York who asked Mrs Cappe and a group of ladies to give their opinion on the way the School was operated. They provide a report after visiting the school suggesting the employment of more teaching assistants and the abolition of the unsatisfactory apprenticeship scheme which had been running from earlier in the century.

From 1786 the running of the School was left to a ladies’ committee who appointed a matron and established a three-month rotating system of education so that the girls were moved on to learn wool and flax spinning, sewing, knitting and housework. Spinning still was the priority with twenty girls employed in spinning wool while ten did housework and the remaining ten were employed in spinning flax, knitting and sewing. The pupils received new clothes every year, and then worked on their next set of clothing and knitted their own stockings and mittens whenever it was their turn to sew or knit during the year.⁸⁵ As well as clothes each girl was given a pair of scissors, thimble, knitting sheath, pin cushion, huswife, work box and a work bag; each Easter the scissors were sharpened and their huswifes restocked with needles, thread and an ounce of pins. In the last two years before they left

⁸³ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, End of December 1796

⁸⁴ C. Cappe, *An Account of Two Charity Schools for the Education of Girls and of a Female Friendly Society in York*, (York, 1800), pp. 1, 8

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.29-38

when they were about sixteen years old, the girls were also taught to write and received some grounding in arithmetic including casting accounts.⁸⁶

Mrs Cappe felt that the training provided at the School was limited so that Grey Coat girls would not be sufficiently educated to fully qualify them to be suitable nursery maids, but they ‘will not be found deficient in habits of order, oeconomy, decency, industry and cleanliness; nor in the principles of general rectitude’. Whatever the inadequacies of their education, the girls left the school with sufficient training to allow them to be placed in service and enhance their chances of continuing to earn an adequate living. The school continued to operate on this basis, but spinning activity began to fall off after 1806 and had ceased at the School by 1837.

Fourteen years after her *Oeconomy of Charity*, Trimmer published another version, which was greatly altered from her earlier book. She still promoted her view that the poor should be provided with an education sufficient for their station while allowing time for them to do useful employment as training for their future working lives. However, there appears to be a shift in priority from encouraging spinning alongside knitting toward the teaching of plain sewing. She noted that, of her own three schools of industry in Brentford, only the plain work school survived.⁸⁷ However spinning wheels for flax and wool ‘should be constant appendages to Charity Schools, not only upon the principle of oeconomy, but for exercise, particularly the long running wheel, which will be found very conducive to the health of those children.’⁸⁸

Trimmer saw that plain work is a useful skill for all women, but particularly so for ‘Charity girls’ who would not be properly educated unless they were achieved some proficiency with their needles. She reiterated the contemporary thinking that schools should focus on girls making and mending their own clothes and knitting their own stockings as well as working for their own families, taking in work from outside contacts, stitching items for sale and, using donated cloth, sewing clothes and baby linen for the poor ‘who are out at work all day or cannot use the needle.’⁸⁹ From this it can be assumed that women lower down the social scale did not necessarily learn sewing within the family taught by female relatives and the schools could pass on a skill that may not be acquired in any other way. Notably

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 47, 58

⁸⁷ S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or, an Address to Ladies; Adapted to the Present State of Charitable Institutions in England*, (London, 1801)

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.97

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.97-8

Trimmer suggested that girls stitch patchwork in their needlework training; plain seaming techniques could be taught in this way ‘But it would be charity to employ the girls upon patch-work, rather than let them grow up to maturity without being able to work at their needles.’⁹⁰

However successful individual establishments such as the Foundling Hospital, The Asylum for Orphans and Deserted Girls, Ackworth School or the Grey Coat School were in providing basic education for children, there was some debate in the last two decades of the century about how education could be communicated to the wider population of poor children. Reverend Andrew Bell returned from India and described the system of education he developed in a Madras orphanage to teach large classes of boys using a limited number of teachers who were helped by student assistants.⁹¹ Joseph Lancaster adapted Bell’s methods to develop his own Royal Lancasterian system of monitorial education, which he applied in the boys’ school he opened in Borough Road in south London in 1798 and outlined in *Improvements in Education*.⁹² Lancaster’s two sisters, Mary and Sarah opened a school for girls nearby in 1805 to provide a similar education in reading, writing and arithmetic, but with the addition of needlework training. Despite many institutions such as the Grey Coat school continuing to promote spinning into the early nineteenth century, it was significant that the Lancasters accepted that factory-based spinning has removed the need for the training and employment of a large number of hand spinners and that girls needed to learn needle skills in order to earn a living. However the needlework components of the school curriculum lapsed due to the sisters’ frequent absence from school and it was found impossible to teach needlework to individual girls when they were all working at their own pace. They found that twenty girls occupied the attention of one teacher when they were learning needlework ‘while one hundred and eighty others must read or be idle for want of instruction’.⁹³

By 1810 concern was expressed that so many girls were missing an important part of their education because ‘from the neglect of a delegate have been so much strangers to the attainment of needle-work as an essential qualification for females in future life’. The Finance committee of the Society for promoting the Royal British or Lancasterian System for

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.204

⁹¹ Rev. Dr. A. Bell, *An Experiment in Education, made in the Male Asylum of Madras*, (Edinburgh, 1797)

⁹² J. Lancaster, *Improvements in Education, as its respects the industrious classes of the community*, (London, 1803)

⁹³ M. Lancaster and S. Lancaster, *A Report of the Rise and Progress of the School for Girls, Instituted in the Royal Lancasterian System of Education*, (Tooting, London: Royal Lancasterian System of Education, 1812), Introduction, iii-iv

the Education of the Poor asked the sisters to prepare a report setting out an effective way to teach girls. The sisters found that, if each group of girls learnt and worked the same sewing technique together, it was easier for the pupil monitors to instruct and oversee the work and for the school mistress to superintend and check it. They proposed a set of eleven numbered lessons ranging from hemming and seaming to darning and marking so that girls could learn all the required plain sewing techniques and then, after working up through all the class levels, make a garment later when they ‘will be proficient in all kinds of work’.⁹⁴ It should be noted that the whip stitch or over-sewn technique was not included in these lessons; this stitch is used in mosaic patchwork and it was suggested in the earlier Chapter 1 that the mosaic patchwork technique could be used as a signifier of patchwork made in better social circumstances.

The Report formed the core of the detailed syllabus for girls, which was published by the renamed British and Foreign School Society in 1816 when it was noted that ‘the middle and upper ranks of society are more dependent upon the poor, than without a little reflection they are apt to be aware of: it is to their labour and skill that we owe our comforts and conveniences’.⁹⁵ The directions for the girls’ classroom layout varied from the boys’ schools in that the desks and seating boards needed to be set slightly further apart by two to three inches ‘to allow the girls freedom to work’. A very regimented system of teaching needlework in ten different ‘operations’ covered the plain sewing techniques listed in the 1812 Report, but also included tucking and whipping techniques where the whip-stitch was used to attach a finer fabric or frill to cotton cloth. The syllabus stressed that it was important to take work in or make items for sale as soon as the girls had practiced their skills so they could improve their work, but also to help defray expenses.⁹⁶

The second edition of the syllabus was published in 1821 and was set out in a similar way, but with twelve classes for needlework and the addition of a finishing class where girls could show their skills by cutting making and completing a garment such as a shirt or cap in the Foundling Hospital style.⁹⁷ Both Trimmer and the British and Foreign School Society stressed the need for economy when teaching girls to sew. The Society’s syllabus suggested

⁹⁴ Ibid.,

⁹⁵ British and Foreign Schools Society, *Manual of the System of Teaching Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, and Needle-work in the Elementary Schools of the British and Foreign School Society*, (London, 1816), Preface

⁹⁶ Ibid., p.41

⁹⁷ British and Foreign School Society, *A Manual of the System of Teaching Needlework in the Elementary Schools of the British and Foreign School Society*, (London, 1821)

that younger girls could try folding paper for hems and seams before moving to fabric and practice sewing should be done on scraps and rags rather than cotton yardage.

‘Regular progressive work occupies my mind best’⁹⁸: Needlework as a source of consolation, reflection and entertainment

When Anna Margareta Brereton’s son died in 1800, she retired to her room at Brinton Hall in Norfolk and began to sew. While making a nineteen-piece set of patchwork bed hangings, she found an outlet for her sorrow and used the project not to fill an indulged woman’s leisure hours, but to stitch a way out of her grief and re-discover her religious devotion (see Fig. 4).⁹⁹ Anna Margareta’s experience echoes those of many other women of the time. They were well practised in all needlework skills and able to carry out their sewing projects ‘mechanically’ while focussing on emotional concerns, intellectual activities or enjoying the society of family and friends.

Recent work has emphasised that needlework symbolised the restricted role of eighteenth-century women, who were confined to their domestic environment and constrained by male expectations and identified many contemporary authors who associated embroidery with femininity and order. Despite concerns about the effect of needlework on women’s health leading to a narrowing of their intellect, the majority of such authors felt that such work kept women safely within their own homes and distracted them from gossip and politics.¹⁰⁰

The latter was far from the truth since a needlewoman, who was trained from childhood, was capable of sewing while conducting conversation and gossip or stitching while ‘her mind was...flying free’.¹⁰¹ It would appear that some women would have had a different outlook on their work and may have used the hours spent sewing to negotiate time for their social, emotional and intellectual well-being. They accepted the tedium of plain sewing and the repetitive nature of decorative stitching in exchange for time to chat, reflect

⁹⁸ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 3, 10 March 1800

⁹⁹ C. Ferguson, ‘The Brereton Bedhangings’, *Costume and Textile Association Miscellany*, (2012), pp.4-7, available at http://www.ctacostume.org.uk/uploaded_files/2012%20Miscellany%20standard%20size.pdf accessed: 5 January 2013

¹⁰⁰ Contemporary authors such as: Anon., *The Ladies Library, Written by a Lady*, (London, 1714); I. Watts, *A Treatise on the Education of Children and Youth*, 2nd Edition, (London, 1769); Dr. Gregory, *A Father’s Legacy to His Daughters*, (London, 1792); T. Gisborne, *An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex*, (London, 1797); H. Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady*, (London, 1773)

¹⁰¹ See authors such as Parker, *The Subversive Stitch*, (1984), pp.110-46 and Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, (2009), pp.231-256

and contemplate. Sarah Hurst often set off from her home in Horsham to spend the day helping her aunt around the quilting frame; the social environment around the iconic American quilting bee was full of chatter and storytelling and mid eighteenth-century Horsham would have been no different. When visitors came to call at the Hurst's shop or home, Sarah's magnum opus, the catgut apron, was brought out to be worked on to wholesale admiration although she did wonder 'when... will this stupendous piece of work be finish'd',¹⁰².

Social visits from family friends, visits to the Longley's in Rochester or holidays around the south of England did not limit Anna Larpent's needlework and she travelled equipped with work to continue. She did not stop her stitching when members of her close social circle were present and often used the opportunity to display the latest decorative needlework project chatting the while or being read the latest novel or play.

Sewing could be a solitary task as well and needlework acted as a distraction when women worried about personal matters. Gertrude Savile constantly sat at her frame working tent stitch and used the time to fulminate on the perceived slights from her family. She probably found the stabbing motion of the needle through the canvas emphasised her feelings. Sarah Hurst experienced long periods parted from her future husband who served for long periods abroad in the Marine Corps and worried about the dangers he would be exposed to on land and sea:

Work very hard fancying the pattern of my apron, but am often interrupted by people in the shop. Allmost wish I did not love work so well, yet it passes away many hours that I shou'd probably employ by tormenting myself about what hangs like a heavy load in my Heart, the fate of my Dear Harry.¹⁰³

Anna Larpent kept her mind active while doing plain work. She found that 'the mechanism of such work' did not restrict 'the action of my Mind' enabling her to devote time to revising what she had read earlier in the day while she was sewing.¹⁰⁴ After reading the first Dissertation on the Mission of the Apostles for two hours she 'made notes from it then worked muslin work an hour to reflect over what I had read' and studied Paley's Evidences

¹⁰² 19 April 1760, Djabri, *Diaries of Sarah Hurst*, (2003), p.144

¹⁰³ 26 September 1759, Djabri, *Diaries of Sarah Hurst*, (2003), p.111

¹⁰⁴ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 4 June 1798

before she again ‘worked plain work shirts 2 hours that I might reflect over what I have read’.¹⁰⁵

Whenever she was upset she resorted to her needle for consolation. When her son George fell ill while away at school she ‘did much useful work, looking over linen, mending etc. and not a little anxious about George’.¹⁰⁶ She was deeply troubled when she discovered that one of her husband’s friends used the cover of social visits to woo her younger sister Clara and spent many weeks coming to terms with the news of the impending marriage. On receiving the news of the death of a relative she ‘worked all the Evening for my Mind was too disturbed to read & there is a Monotony in X Stitch & a cheerfulness in forming the various shades that soothes my mind’. She was still ‘too agitated to read’ three days later and ‘indulged again in painting & work’.¹⁰⁷ During the following month she:

worked Tent Stitch all morning – a new Job of work which interested and amused my mind – I always find that work do so – the monotony & mechanism like the returning sound of water or any other sensation that marks time calms the spirits by fixing the attention then the glowing colours and shading please the Imagination.¹⁰⁸

Another period of worry coincided with her sister and family making plans to move out of London to Suffolk in 1800. She tried to amuse herself by making a pattern for another cross stitch project and:

I then had a Job of Work which entirely occupied me. Sewing on the border on a bed Curtain &c I alwys find when my spirits are oppressed & I cannot follow what I read that some regular progressive work occupies my mind best.¹⁰⁹

Family bereavement also affected Anna Brereton. She and her husband had ten children between 1781 and 1796, but four of the children died in infancy. When her fourteen-year old son died in 1800 her health broke down and she retired to her bedroom and, over the next few years, undertook a project to create new patchwork hangings and cover for her bed. She sought solace in the church as she carefully pieced her mosaic patchwork and appliqué designs and found both an outlet for her grief and a reawakening of her faith. She was

¹⁰⁵ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol.3, 3 December 1799 and 7 Nov 1800

¹⁰⁶ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 3, February 16 1799

¹⁰⁷ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 12 June 1797 and 15 June 1797

¹⁰⁸ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, July 1797

¹⁰⁹ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 3, 10 and 11 March 1800

supported by her family who, it is reported, rallied around to source the large variety of cotton dress and furnishing prints that make up the design.¹¹⁰

Anna Margareta's patchwork projects coincided with a fashion for stitching mourning pictures, which were usually in a neoclassical style with figures draped over tombstones and carved memorials. Anna did not make the standard mourning picture that would require thought and attention to follow a complicated pattern in a variety of colours, but embarked on a much lengthier project. She worked mechanically wrapping scraps of fabric over thousands of hexagon-shaped paper templates and joining the patches together using the over-sewn whip stitch. The unthinking work allowed her to reflect on her personal loss and meditate on the consolation offered by the Christian faith. This offered a way out of her grief so that, at her funeral service in 1819, Reverend William Upjohn asked the congregation to 'cherish her memory as a bright example of cheerful godliness'.¹¹¹

The long running-stitched seam in a night shirt, the numerous diagonal stitches on a chair seat cover or the over sewn patches on a patchwork bed curtain all served a purpose. They provided women with time to sit and contemplate while performing the needlework tasks that embodied the idealisation of the practical, efficient and skilled homemaker. Women like Anna Larpent, Sarah Hurst and Anna Brereton knew that sewing had tied them to the home, but it also provided them with hours of privacy when their thoughts could be their own and their worries could be addressed while their needle moved through the cloth.

Conclusion

In this chapter, patchwork has been considered in relation to aspects of the domestic routine in the households of middling or genteel women. It was one of the many kinds of plain and decorative needlework which was practised by women in better social circumstances and the form, fabric and design of patchwork was influenced by their training, education and experience. Contemporary writing revealed and recent research confirmed that the lot of eighteenth century women was to train for their future life as wives and mothers and to spend most their time in the domestic sphere. However it is possible to show that, while women understood the expectations laid out for them, some were still able to negotiate time for their own social and intellectual interests.

¹¹⁰ Ferguson, 'The Brereton Bedhangings', (2012), p.4

¹¹¹ Ibid., p.7

The techniques that were applied to patchwork were learnt during a girl's introduction to needle skills that usually commenced at home even if they were then refined at school. The basic stitches of plain sewing were introduced to girls at an early age and their skills were expected to be well-honed by constant practice through repetitive stints of needlework. This culminated in an ability to stitch in a way that was described as 'mechanical', which allowed women of higher social class to multitask and sew whilst socialising or making time for reflection and contemplation.

Significantly the needlework practice of middling and genteel women would not be mirrored in all plebeian households due to the lack of sewing skills amongst many working class women. The nation's need for substantial supplies of hand-spun wool and linen thread made spinning a priority at the expense of needlework and it was not until the advent of factory-produced thread that the emphasis on girls' training changed from spinning to plain sewing. Previous chapters have demonstrated that there were plebeian owners and makers of patchwork, but it is suggested that the numbers of plebeian women who had the ability to make patchwork would be restricted mainly to women with a background in the textile trades or those trained in charity schools for a future life in service as household servants and ladies' or nursery maids.

Chapter 5 ‘Worked patchwork for a work bag’¹: Making Patchwork

Throughout the eighteenth century, a variety of decorative needlework and crafts had their moment of popularity before being overtaken by the next fad. From jappanning, crewel work and shell work to filigree (coiled paper work) and netting, patterns and designs were offered in books and magazines, equipment was sold in haberdashers and instructions offered in advertisements for girls’ schools and needlework emporia.² Patchwork stands out as a needlework that was practiced in the domestic sphere without the excessive commercial activity of shops supplying the necessary materials and equipment and professionals offering designs and training.

The patchwork techniques were not taught at school, but appear to have been inculcated at home and it is only at the end of the century was there any suggestion that new methods were introduced by needlework teachers. Patchwork practice was widespread because it was affordable and did not necessarily require a high level of sewing skill; it could be made by drawing on a limited number of materials and equipment, which were readily available in the home and employed only basic plain-sewing stitches.

This chapter considers the materials, patterns and designs required to make patchwork. As in the previous chapter (Chapter 4), it draws on Anna Larpent’s journals, which survive from 1790 onward and other diaries and reminiscences from the period. In addition extracts from contemporary publications, including newspapers and magazines, together with reports from trials heard at the Old Bailey court give some access to the methods of patchwork practice at all levels of society.

¹ Diary of Anna Margareta Larpent 1790-1830 are held in the Huntington Library, California, USA, ref. HM 31201; Microfilm of the journals can be seen at the British Library M1016/1-7. In this chapter the latter reference number will be used; Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 1, 19 June 1795

² Originally filigree meant fine decorative metalwork, but, later in the eighteenth century it was employed to describe coiled paper work, which in modern parlance would be called quilling. For example Mrs Robertson provided instructions for filigree, shell work, jappanning and gilding in her instruction book in 1766; H. Roberston, *The Young Ladies School of Arts: Containing A great Variety of Practical Receipts*, (Edinburgh, 1766). It was particularly fashionable in the last two decades of the century with the technique taught in private schools and shops supplying paper strips and wooden mounts. See Dyche’s definition; ‘a kind of enriched work on gold or silver in the manner of little threads or grains; the term is also applied to ornamental works, formed of strips of paper, differently coloured, rolled into various figures, and artfully combined.’ T. Dyche, *A New General Dictionary ; Peculiarly Calculated for the Use and Improvement of Such as are Unacquainted with the Learned Languages*, 17th edition, (London, 1794).

Contemporary accounts provide insight into the sourcing of fabric and paper within the home and the purchase of extra materials from the second-hand markets, hawkers and fabric sales, in discounted bundles of pieces to be found in haberdashers and linen drapers or as full-price yardage. The chapter also considers how women used patterns for their decorative needlework and whether patchwork designs were created entirely at home without input from commercial pattern drawers.

‘Dickson the linen draper called I bought a gown’³: Sourcing the materials for patchwork

Patchwork, by its very nature, is made from the fabric that could be found in any eighteenth-century household, but documentary and material evidence reveals that the sourcing of the material was done in a variety of ways. Anna Larpent does not record what she used to make her patchwork workbag in June 1795 or how she acquired it, but it is clear that new fabric, either bought as yardage or in bundles of pieces, was stitched together with recycled scraps of garments and household textiles and cloth bought in second-hand markets to make patchwork.⁴

It could be suggested that the use of a variety of fabrics in patchwork reflect both the rise in consumption during the period and the many developments in textile production including a growing taste for printed cottons and linens. As considered in an earlier chapter (Chapter 1), patchwork objects from the early eighteenth century were recorded as containing recycled silks, dating across a period of at least seventy years. Whereas some from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, while still including recycled cloth, contain a large variety of new printed cottons, which were likely to have been produced in a much tighter time frame of one or two decades.⁵

By exploiting their non-fraying, almost felt-like nature, needlewomen made use of the thicker woollen cloths commonplace in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to

³ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 22 August 1798

⁴ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 1, 19 June 1795

⁵ Early pieces include the 1718 coverlet, D. O’Connor, ‘The Dress Show: A Study of the Fabrics in the 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet’, *Quilt Studies*, (2002/3), Issue 4/5, pp79-93; also see B. Long, ‘The Blossoming of Patchwork: A Study of Cotton and Linen Patchwork at the End of the Eighteenth and the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue 7, (2006), p29-33; C. Browne, ‘Making and Using Quilts in Eighteenth-century Britain’, in S. Pritchard, ed., *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*, (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), p.45

stitch the inlaid patchwork method practiced in continental Europe.⁶ However the patchwork techniques that were generally employed in Britain, required cloth light enough to allow the fabric shapes to be manipulated and turnings folded over to the back of the work. Authors have noted the gradual introduction of lighter silk and woollen cloths, from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, and these, together with linens and increasing imports of cottons, provided a group of suitable fabrics for needlewomen to work with.⁷

In the early part of this study period, patchwork played its part in providing pattern in a generally plain world. Women below the elite had a comparatively, restricted access to patterned cloths to use for furnishing their homes and clothing the family, since the higher costs of complex woven brocade silks and wools put most of them beyond the reach of households with a limited budget. Needlewomen resorted to a variety of embroidery and quilting techniques, which, together with textural patterns obtained from slashing, pinking, gathering and tucking, provided some relief from plain cloth. By combining pieces of different coloured silks or wools together, they produced patchwork designs that achieved the same aim.

The century saw a gradual expansion in the use of printed cottons and linens for furnishing and dress and needlewomen were faced with the challenge of inventing new ways of exploiting the colour, tone, shade, shape and scale of pattern printed on these cloths. Within a generation or two, seamstresses no longer made patchwork just by combining colours together, but developed an eye for placing pattern next to pattern. When fabric for a patchwork project was not in short supply and the maker could afford some wastage, needlewomen created additional patterns by selecting specific areas of the printed design, often creating kaleidoscopic effects when the patchwork pieces were stitched together.

Early patchwork items were made in a period when there was a strong tradition for re-modelling clothes, handing down garments within the family or as rewards for servants as well as the gifting of fabric or clothes to religious institutions for church vestments and

⁶ D. Neuland-Kitzerow, S. Joram and E. Karasek, E. eds., *Inlaid Patchwork in Europe from 1500 to the Present*, (Berlin: Museum Europäischer Kulturen Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2009)

⁷This historiography includes: B. Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite, The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1600-1800*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); N. B. Harte, *The New Draperies in the Low Countries and England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); J. Styles, 'What were Cottons for in the Early Industrial Revolution?', in G. Riello and P. Parthasarathi, eds., *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles 1200-1850*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.307-26; G. Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

hangings.⁸ Jonathan Swift noted in 1745 that ladies were cutting up their dresses to use for furnishings such as patchwork screens, stools and cushions.⁹ The Arundells of Wardour Castle, Wiltshire were one of a number of Roman Catholic families who were known to donate clothing for use as vestments for priests within their estates in the early decades of the eighteenth century and these gifts may have been the source of the silks seen in the Wardour patchwork chasuble and maniple (see Chapter 1).¹⁰ The tradition continued in some families throughout the century since Reverend James Woodforde's niece Nancy also gave away clothing to servants. He noted in 1782 that he married his former maid Elizabeth Claxton to Charles Cary and that Elizabeth 'was dressed in a Linnen Gown that my niece gave her some time back'.¹¹

Such legally or, even illegally, obtained clothing could be sold on the second-hand market or cut up to provide patchwork pieces. As early as 1726, the value of patchwork pieces was recorded. Mary Rich was found guilty at the Old Bailey of stealing items including '80 Pieces of Silk value 9s. 9 Pieces of Brocade Silk, 2s 6d' that 'were such as were used for Patchwork, &c.'. ¹² Second-hand cloth continued to be available to use for patchwork throughout the period. In 1804, Eleanor Flaherty and Mary Langford were accused of stealing a number of garments and patchwork pieces and, in her defence, Eleanor Flaherty claimed that she had bought the calico pieces in Rag-Fair, where 'you can buy pieces of calico in Rag-fair, of three yards for sixpence'. ¹³

The recycling of household textiles was an accepted practice in the century and use could be made of un-worn sections of redundant furnishings. In particular, when stocks of imported and home-produced printed cottons were limited by the Calico Acts passed in the early part of the century the slightest scrap of cloth could be salvaged to serve a second life in needlework and perpetuate the look of the desirable Indian cotton prints.

⁸ M. Lambert, 'Small Presents Confirm Friendships: The Gifting of Clothing and Textiles in England from the Late Seventeenth to the Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Text*, Vol. 32, (2005), pp.24-32

⁹ J. Swift, *Directions to Servants in General*, London, Chap. IX, (1745), p.81

¹⁰ Tessa Murdoch, curator at V&A, personal communication: February 2011

¹¹ 12 October 1784, J. Beresford, *The Diary of a Country Parson: The Reverend James Woodforde*, Vol. 11, 1782-87, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), p.156

¹² *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, December 1726 trial of Mary Rich (t17261207-57), www.oldbaileyonline.org, accessed: 24 November 2008

¹³ Rag-Fair on Rosemary Lane, London was a large second-hand market for old clothes and cheap fabric; *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, April 1804 trial of Eleanor Flaherty and Mary Langford (t18040411-40), accessed: 9 September 2006

Ever since Colby published her work on the history of patchwork in 1958, the Levens Hall, Cumbria patchwork quilt and bed curtain, made from Indian printed cottons, have been regarded as the earliest known in Britain.¹⁴ The claim is based on a long-standing belief in the family that the work was done about 1708 by Colonel James Grahme's second wife and two daughters, but no letters, diary entries or inventories confirm the date.¹⁵ The seven print designs on the Indian cotton seen in the patchwork are probably of the period from the late seventeenth century into the early eighteenth century, but it cannot be resolved whether the cottons were incorporated unused into the patchwork close to this period or recycled from other furnishings at some later date.

Colonel James Grahme was appointed as Keeper of the Privy Purse to James II in 1685 and acted for him after his departure for France in 1688. A Freeman of the East India Company, he also looked after the King's shares in the East India and Guinea Companies, but was forced to account to the Exchequer for the entire share value when he attempted to dispose of the shares for James in 1691. It is possible that Grahme had preferential access to East India Company goods before his fall from grace and exile to his country estates, but less likely that he or his family acquired new Indian cottons in any quantity in the first decade of the eighteenth century when he still suffered financial difficulties brought about by his earlier association with the Stuart dynasty. It is more probable that the household recycled Indian cottons from existing household furnishings.¹⁶

Later in the century Ellen Stock, née Weeton, was careful to obtain the cheapest fabrics for her patchwork or re-use household textiles. In a parcel containing a fragment of patchwork that she sent to her daughter in 1824 she enclosed a letter to described its source 'The piece of patchwork is out of an old Quilt I made above 20 years ago; it may serve as a pattern. The Hexagon in the middle was a shred of our best bed hangings; they were Chintz, from the East Indies, which my father brought home with him from one of his voyages.' Ellen Stock's father died in 1788.¹⁷

¹⁴ A. Colby, *Patchwork*, (London: Batsford, 1958), p.96; Colby, A. *Patchwork Quilts*, (London: Batsford, 1965), p.32

¹⁵ No reference to the patchwork bed furnishings were found in household and linen inventories dating 1699, 1703, 1723, 1729, 1737 from Levens Hall, Levens MSS Inventories 7, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32, Cumbria Record Office, Kendal

¹⁶ J. Bagot, *Colonel James Grahme of Levens: A Biographical Sketch of Jacobite Times*, (London: W. Kent and Co., 1886)

¹⁷ E. Hall, ed, *Miss Weeton's Journal of a Governess*, 2 vols., (Devon: David and Charles Reprints, 1969), Vol. 2, p.325

At the same period Anna Larpent showed frugality when she recycled or re-modelled clothing and furnishing in her home. She made up some curtains for her London home and, finding that some of the border was missing, discovered that she could ‘imitate copperplate very well’ by ‘painting upon Glazed calico’ instead of buying new fabric.¹⁸ She re-made gloves into mittens or re-cut Mr Larpent’s waistcoats to fit her sons and in 1796 she ‘altered & mended some chair covers to avoid buying new’. In 1800 she ‘Unpicked an Old Gown for dying [dyeing]’.¹⁹

Unpicking dresses for re-use or for laundering and scouring was a common task for the economical housewife and given the change in fashion leading to a narrower shape for dresses by the end of the century, an old dress may have provided a number of yards of cloth to use for another needlework project. When studying over sixty women’s dresses and jackets from the eighteenth century, Dowdell noted that the construction of women’s garments incorporated plain sewing stitches, which were easy to access and simple to un-pick. This was unlike men’s tailoring where the seams were more difficult to reach because of the ‘bagging-out’ method of combining the outer fabric with the inside lining.²⁰

However, Anna Larpent was a woman of her time and indulged her taste for shopping. When in London she was able to visit a variety of shops very close to her homes, first in Newman Street and then in Charlotte Street. She frequently details her shopping and window-shopping trips out with family or friends and describes her own purchases as well as carrying out commissions for friends and family in the country. Recent writing on shops and shopping has re-examined the status of shops and suggested that the number and variety of shops grew over the period so that they became the main source of saleable goods at the expense of street markets and itinerant tradesmen.²¹ Despite this, it would appear that Anna Larpent and members of her social class could have sourced their textiles in a variety of ways as well as from shops.

¹⁸ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 5-8 June 1796

¹⁹ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 11 July 1796 and Vol. 3, 10 July 1800

²⁰ C. Dowdell, *The Fruits of Nimble Fingers: Garment Construction and the Working Lives of Eighteenth-century English Needlewomen*, unpublished MA thesis University of Alberta, Canada, (2010), p.71

²¹ H-C. Mui and L. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London: Routledge, 1989), C. Walsh, ‘Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-century London’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (1995), pp.157-76; N. Cox, *The Complete Tradesman: A Study in Retailing 1550-1820*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); H. Berry, ‘Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England’, *The Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. XII, (2002), pp.375-94

When she was in Surrey, tradesmen, such as the linen draper, called on her. Itinerant salesman also continued to travel in country areas selling haberdashery and fabric despite the campaigns in the 1780s to eliminate licensed hawkers and pedlars. Mui and Mui have noted that most of the outcry against the campaign came from hawkers selling haberdashery and that they were supported in their petitions by the suppliers of the commodities that hawkers mostly sold such as ‘manufacturers and printers of cotton, handkerchiefs, calicoes, silk, linen, thread etc.’. They concluded that wool cloth was rarely hawked and the newer textiles such as printed cottons and linens were lighter to carry and lacked some of the traditional sales outlets open to woollen manufacturers.²²

The Reverend James Woodforde records frequent visits from such salesmen including ‘Bagshawe of Derbyshire’ who came regularly from north Derbyshire to follow his sales route around Norfolk. In 1782, he recorded ‘One Mr Aldridge who carries about Cottons, Linens, Muslins, Lace, Holland; &c. in a cart and come round regularly this way once in ten weeks, called at my house this morning.’²³ He was still visiting fourteen years later when ‘William Aldridge of Norwich who carries about the County, Cottons, Muslins &c. called here this Morning.’²⁴ Al(l)dridge sold dress lengths to Woodforde to give to his niece Nancy and also pieces of cotton for her patchwork. James Woodforde bought ‘1 yrd of different kinds of Cotton for my Niece pd 0.2.10 [two shillings and ten pence]’ in 1789 and, later purchased ‘1 yard and ½ of Patches for Nancy 0.3.6 [three shillings and six pence]’ in 1791.²⁵ Bagshaw sold him ‘16 half Quarters [four and half inches] of Cotton and for Patches 0.5.0 [five shillings]’ which he gave to Nancy ‘for her work’; purchase of a variety of short lengths of cotton is suggestive of a patchwork project.²⁶

It was noted in Chapter 1 that many of the patchwork objects from later in the century were made from a large number of different fabric designs. One example contained over one hundred and twenty different fabrics in an area approximately 60 by 90 centimetres (24 x 36

²² Mui and Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping*, (1989), pp.73-105

²³ April 16 1782, J. Beresford, ed., *The Diary of a Country Parson*, Vol. II, 1782-1787, (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p.131

²⁴ Tuesday 11 October 1796, J. Beresford, ed., *The Diary of a Country Parson*, Vol. IV, 1792-96, (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), p.313

²⁵ 10 November 1789 and Tuesday 25 October 1791, J. Beresford, ed., *The Diary of a Country Parson*, Vol. III, 1788-92, (1927), pp.150, 308

²⁶ A Half Quarter (or 2 Nails) is equivalent to 4½inches;Friday 5 November 1790, Beresford, *The Diary of a Country Parson*, Vol. III, 1788-92, (1927), pp.225-6

ins) (see Fig. 48).²⁷ In the study of another patchwork coverlet, dated 1797, it was recorded that:

It is virtually impossible to count up the exact number of individual fabrics appearing in this coverlet. Primarily this is because there are so many different fabrics and many of the scraps used are so tiny that it is not possible to identify them individually.... But it is also possible to identify as many as 20 different materials within a single 8 inch [20.5cm] rectangle.²⁸

Such variety of fabric patterns was only achieved by a needlewoman adding to her own fabric scrap bag through purchase of bundles of patchwork pieces. It would appear that much of the cloth sold this way was not of sufficient quality to be sold at full price and discounted patchwork pieces may have been a way that hawkers and merchants sold off surplus fabrics. Print works could also have been a direct source of saleable fents and second-quality cloth. When writing to her brother, Miss Weeton sent a message to her sister-in-law saying ‘I can meet with no prints for patch work for her in the way she wished me to procure them. If a bargain of that kind falls in my way, I will remember my commission.’²⁹ The un-published diary for 1818 of Hannah M. Wilson, later Crosthwaite, set out her personal accounts and described how she spent her quarterly allowance of six pounds and five shillings (125 shillings). She recorded that she spent eleven shillings on a dress (likely to be a dress length) and bought pieces for patchwork for eight shillings and nine pence.³⁰

No records have been found of a draper or haberdasher offering patchwork pieces for sale and their newspaper advertisements and trade cards were more likely to be focussing on full price goods. However Mrs John Soane notes that she went to ‘Avey’s’ and ‘bought cotton remnants’.³¹ Records from the Old Bailey trials show that such pieces were available and were often stolen to be sold on. Mary Owen was found guilty in 1791 of stealing items including ‘twenty remnants of cotton’ from her employer who was an upholsterer and cabinet maker. The pieces later ended up in a patchwork bedcover which Owen raffled in the neighbourhood.³² A linen draper was indicted in 1800 for receiving ‘a quantity of remnants of

²⁷ Patchwork coverlet database 4, Private collection; Long, ‘The Blossoming of Patchwork’, (2006), p.30

²⁸ J. Barber, ‘Fabric as Evidence: Unravelling the Meaning of a Late Eighteenth Century Coverlet’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue 3, (2001), p.27

²⁹ 14 November 1808, *Miss Weeton’s Journal*, (1969), Vol. 1, p127

³⁰ Hannah M. Wilson diary for 1818, un-published Norrington family papers

³¹ Transcripts of Mrs. Soane’s Diary, 1804-1813, cited in Barber, ‘Fabric as Evidence’, (2001), p.18

³² *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, June 1791 trial of Mary Owen (t17910608-1), accessed: 19 April 2011

British calico' stolen from a calico printer, which she had sold on to a needlewoman who used them in making patchwork.³³

During the 1807 trial of James Adamson for theft of calico, including forty pieces of four and a half inch (half quarter yard) length, the judge asked what use could be made of such short lengths of fabric. The prosecutor, who was a calenderer and cloth packer, replied that 'They sell them; it is but of small value, but an immense quantity is of great value; it is an unfortunate circumstance that that in all the markets they are publically sold as remnants to make patchwork.'³⁴ In this case, the pieces that Adamson stole were probably full price, first quality calicoes since he obtained them by cutting off both the ends of cloth that he was finishing for the calenderer.

Fabrics at the lowest possible prices for ready money were the boast of many transient salesmen who operated by holding occasional bargain sales. They rented rooms in provincial towns and promoted their limited-period sales by advertising in the local newspapers to the irritation of the shopkeepers, who complained that they were able to operate with lower overheads by refusing credit sales and having no shop premises to maintain. Thomas Turner felt the impact on his general store in Sussex in 1764 when 'This day came to Jone's a man with a cartload of millinery, mercery, linen-drapery, silver &c., to keep a sale for two days, which must undoubtably be some hurt to trade.' He complained that there would be loss in trade because of the novelty of the sale as well as the perceived bargains to be had.³⁵ Unusually, the prize cargo of a hundred pieces of printed cottons from the ship that had been captured by the naval brig *Blazer* was advertised for auction in Dover in 1809.³⁶

Wholesale fabric warehouses offered similar bargains for cash. Richard Prynne advertised 'Above five hundred cheap printed calicoes, Cottons and Furnitures, from Sixteen-pence a Yard to Two Shillings and Three-pence' in a day sale at the Bengal Warehouse in Bath in 1790.³⁷ Cash payments were the key to such transactions indicating how much the giving of credit might affect shopkeepers. The anonymous author of *The Lady's Economical Assistant*

³³ *The Daily Universal Register*, Saturday 27 September 1800, p.2, The Times Newspaper Archive, <http://gale.cengage.co.uk/times.aspx/> accessed: 25 April 2012; *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1800 trial of Thomas Alliston, Elizabeth Newman (t18000917-95), accessed 29 April 2012

³⁴ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1807 trial of James Adamson (t18070916-67), accessed: 9 September 2006

³⁵ G. H. Jennings, ed., *Thomas Turner, The Diary of a Georgian Shopkeeper*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.67

³⁶ *Kentish Gazette*, Friday 6 January 1809, p.5, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

³⁷ *Bath Chronicle and Gazette*, Thursday 20 May 1790, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

(1808) offered advice on the economical cutting-out of fabric and making women and children's wearing apparel. She suggested that:

In purchasing any material, it is cheapest to buy a piece at a wholesale warehouse... When whole pieces are bought there is always a certain quantity over the measure, and the merchant, of course, can afford it cheaper than the retail dealer. It should be observed in this case, ready money is expected; and I should not do justice if I did not, at the same time remark, that when immediate payment can be met, the retail dealer will be glad to lower his price also.³⁸

However some fabric for patchwork was probably bought for full price by those who could afford it. An invoice of 1785 for the shop of Cartwright, Morris, Bennett & Richardson of London lists the purchase of four lengths of half a yard each of different flowered (printed) cotton and three lengths of a quarter yard each of different Indian cotton; in total two and three quarter yards of cotton in seven different designs. The price per yard ranged from six shillings and six pence to forty shillings and the total cost of the purchase of the short lengths was thirty seven shillings and two pence.³⁹ The purchase of half yard lengths of fabric for patchwork was used as a diversionary tactic during a robbery of a linen draper's shop in 1807. When giving evidence at the Old Bailey trial of Mary Mcartney in 1807, the draper described offering 'a small pattern to make patch work' at one shilling and eight pence a yard and another at one shilling and sixpence a yard.⁴⁰

Catharine Tebay's patchwork coverlet contained an exclusive fabric, which was printed to celebrate the completion of her work in 1817. Her work is the only surviving example where a printer on paper employed a variety of techniques usually reserved for books or newspapers to create a record on plain white calico. Two hexagons are printed to note the making of the work as well as commemorating the recent death of Princess Charlotte. Catharine was recorded as living in Mount Street off Grosvenor Square in 1821 and was probably surrounded by printers' workshops, who may have taken on such an unusual project.⁴¹

³⁸ Anon., *The Lady's Economical Assistant, or The art of cutting out and making the most useful Articles of wearing Apparel, without waste; explained by the Clearest Directions, and Numerous Engravings of appropriate and tasteful patterns*, (London, 1808), Introduction, p.viii

³⁹ Trade Card Collection, A15222 66.94/8, The Museum of London

⁴⁰ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, May 1807 trial of Mary Mcartney (t18070513-28), accessed: 2 January 2012

⁴¹ A. B. Loscalzo, 'Commemoration and Grief: Two Coverlets and the Death of Charlotte Augusta, Princess of Wales', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 13, (2012), pp.52-3

It was noted in Chapter 1 that the frame layout was the most popular design. The feature at the centre of the frame design was sometimes a piece of embroidery, perhaps a reminder of the needlewoman's earlier forays into decorative work. More frequently the maker chose a fabric, often cut from a piece of printed furnishing fabric with a striking, large-scale design. A chair seat cover of white flowers on a red ground, which was printed by the Bannister Hall printworks in about 1802, forms the centre of an early nineteenth century pieced and appliquéd coverlet (see Fig.34).

In the early nineteenth century cotton printers saw a potential market for special printed panels for patchwork. They produced square, oval, circular or octagonal designs featuring flowers, fruit, with added baskets, urns and cornucopia that reflected the design influences of the period. The panels were block printed onto cotton yardage with space between the panels to allow for cutting and turnings. Commemorative panels were produced for a number of significant events such as George III's Golden Jubilee in 1810, Wellington's battle victories at Vittoria and Waterloo in 1813 and 1815 and Princess Charlotte's marriage to Prince Leopold in 1816 (see the Princess Charlotte panel in Fig. 35). Hannah Wilson recorded in her 1818 diary that, as well as the patchwork pieces, she paid two shillings and six pence for a 'centre', which could have been one of these panels.⁴²

Needlewomen stitching patchwork using the mosaic patchwork technique required a ready supply of paper to cut up into templates for their sewing project. Made from cotton and linen rags, paper was a valuable commodity. Coleman in his study of the British paper industry notes that the home paper industry grew rapidly in the eighteenth century, but, for most of the century, much of the production was poor quality and it was not until the last quarter of the century that better quality, British white paper was produced in quantity. Duty was paid on paper in Britain from 1694 and a tax on printed, painted and stained paper was imposed in the early 1700s. Throughout the century successive governments imposed heavy excise duties on imported and home-produced paper, which increased to 2½ pence a pound weight for writing, printing, drawing, elephant and cartridge paper between 1794 and 1801; the duty doubled again in 1801. High production costs coupled with duty charges saw a steep

⁴² Hannah M. Wilson diary for 1818, un-published Norrington family papers

rise in paper prices in the 1790s, which did not fall noticeably until the mechanisation of paper manufacture in the early nineteenth century.⁴³

Thrifty households were careful when using paper and stored paper for future re-use. Ellen Stock did not like to leave a blank space on the pages of her letters and often adopted the custom of writing across at right angles to the lines of letter already written in order to save using another sheet of paper and apologises to her correspondent, Miss Chorley ‘I am afraid you will scarcely be able to read this cross writing.’⁴⁴

The paper templates that do survive in patchwork were generally recycled from letters, bills, newspapers and publications. A silk patchwork coverlet, dated 1718, contains paper templates, which were made from letters, bills and accounts together with a published speech by Lord Haversham to Parliament in 1707 addressing the subject of the union of Scotland with England.⁴⁵ Another silk coverlet, dated 1726, has papers cut from letters, copybooks, printed books and religious texts.⁴⁶ A fragment of a large patchwork bedcover in the Colonial Williamsburg collection, with a British provenance, which is thought to have been made in the second and third decades of the eighteenth century contains paper templates that were cut from a letter dated 1652.⁴⁷

There is also some evidence for the use of ‘new’, un-marked paper: the 1718 coverlet contains some plain paper pieces. The templates remaining in a late eighteenth century, un-lined patchwork coverlet show that the complete patchwork design was drawn on larger pieces of plain paper (see Fig. 15).⁴⁸

The degree to which paper was valued during this period can also be seen across the Atlantic in examples of patchwork containing paper templates, which have an apparent American provenance. The British taxes on paper affected colonial America too. The

⁴³ D. C. Coleman, *British Paper Industry 1495-1860: A Study in industrial growth*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), pp.129-36

⁴⁴ 25 May 1810, *Miss Weeton's Journal*, (1969), Vol.1, p.264

⁴⁵ K. Thompson, and M. Halliwell, ‘Who Put the Text in Textiles? Deciphering Text Hidden Within a 1718 Coverlet: Documentation of Papers Hidden an Early Eighteenth-century Coverlet using Transmitted Light Photography’, in M. Hayward, and E. Kramer, ed. *Textiles and Text: Re-establishing the Links Between Archival and Object-based Research*, AHRC Research Centre for Textile Conservation and Textile Studies Third Annual Conference, 11-13 July 2006, (London: Archetype Publications, 2007), pp.237-44; B. Long, ‘Uncovering Hidden Marks on the 1718 Silk Patchwork Coverlet’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue 9 (2008), p62-83

⁴⁶ S-M Holme and S. Little, ‘The Conservation of the McCord 1726 Pieced Quilt’, *The Canadian Quilter* (The Canadian Quilt Association), Autumn 2001, p50

⁴⁷ Coverlet fragment database 101, Collection of Colonial Williamsburg 2005-1-A

⁴⁸ Long, ‘Hidden Marks’, (2008), p.66; B. Long, ‘Sibling, Cousin or Friend?: Considering the Relationship between Two Late Eighteenth-century Mosaic Patchwork Coverlets’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue 10, (2009), p.98

Townsend Acts of 1767 applied duty at American ports on imported goods including paper, although these duties were repealed in 1770, with the exception of the duty on tea. During the American Revolution and after the birth of the new nation, paper was often in short supply; for example, newspapers in New England and Virginia advertised for rags in order to produce sufficient newsprint for their later editions.⁴⁹

The presence of early mosaic patchwork pieces in the United States suggests that some makers were not troubled by the cost or availability of paper. The maker of the Saltonstall silk patchwork coverlet held in the Peabody Essex museum in New England cut templates from handwritten and printed papers and, in particular, used three different copies of the Harvard graduation list of 1700, which recorded university members from 1642 to 1700, for her project. Recent studies of the silk fabric have led to the conclusion that this bedcover was made at the end of the eighteenth century or the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰ A study of mosaic patchwork quilts, coverlets, and fragments in the South Carolina Lowcountry, which date from the early nineteenth century onwards, demonstrated that there were needlewomen in the area around the thriving port of Charleston who had both the leisure time and abundant paper for their projects.⁵¹

‘Arranged a pattern to work &c for a muslin gown’⁵²: Designs for needlework

When describing her many needlework projects, Anna Larpent was typical of an educated late eighteenth-century woman when she records purchasing commercial designs as well as creating patterns at home for her work. There are references across the period to the sale of embroidery designs for needlewomen who, it was suggested by some, were incapable of creating their own, but alongside this was mention of those who had the talent to draw their own design.

⁴⁹ Florence Pettit cites advertisements in the *New-England Courant* (undated) and the *Boston Gazette* (1761 and 1765) that seek rags for paper. See F. H. Pettit, *America's Printed and Painted Fabrics 1600-1900*, (New York: Hastings House, 1970), pp. 85, 97-8. In her study of textile production on plantations in the Chesapeake Bay area, Gloria Seaman Allen surveyed entries in a number of newspapers from Virginia and Maryland. See G. S. Allen, G. S., 'Slaves as Textile Artisans: Documentary Evidence for the Chesapeake Region', *Uncoverings*, Vol. 22, (2001), pp.1-36. She noted the contemporaneous advertisements requesting rags for newsprint. Allen, pers. comm. with the author, November 2007

⁵⁰ D. E. Kraak, 'Early American Silk Patchwork Quilts', P. Benes, ed., *Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production and Consumption*, Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife, Annual Proceedings, (Boston: Boston University, 1997), pp.20-1

⁵¹ J. Hiester, L. Horton and N. Tournier, *Mosaic Quilts: Paper Template Piecing in the South Carolina Lowcountry*, (Greenville, SC,: Curious Works Press and Charleston, S.C.: The Charleston Museum, 2002)

⁵² Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 20 October 1797

In the seventeenth century it had been common for pattern drawers to create embroidery designs drawn in ink on linen for use in raised work, bead work and other forms of embroidery. The pattern drawers sourced their designs from illustrated books of flowers, birds, and animals such as *A Booke of Beasts, Birds, Flowers, Fruit, Flies and Wormes* published by Thomas Johnson and *A Book of Flowers, Fruits, Beastes, Birds and Flies exactly drawn* by Peter Stent. When transposing the images they gave little thought to size and scale so that seventeenth-century embroidery is recognisable for its bizarre combination of out-of-scale flowers, insects and birds next to animals and human forms. James Taylor published an early needlework design book *The Needle's Excellency* which was in its twelfth edition in 1640 and after a long poem in 'The Praise of the Needle' provided small images of new designs for embroidery and lace (see Fig. 49).⁵³

Contemporary sources in the eighteenth century reveal a continuing widespread attitude that women would need help with preparing a design for their needlework. Opportunistic publishers promoted the sale of their prints of flowers, fruits and birds by making claims such as in Furber's *Twelve Months of Flowers*:

The Curiosity of this Work (being the first of the kind ever was attempted) as also its usefulness, not only to the Ladies in their Needle-works, but to the Workmen in their several occupations, such as Tapestry, Weavers, Carvers &c and all Virtuoso's in Flowers, makes it truly estimable' and also 'affording a most agreeable Amusement and an ingenious Exercize in Drawing. Painting, Needlework &c.⁵⁴

Overton's *Flowers* published in 1732 was suggested as 'useful to the Ladies in their Needle-work and Japanning'.⁵⁵ *The Florist*, a pattern book by Heckle, was advertised as 'An extensive and curious Collection of Flowers, for the imitation of Young Ladies either in Drawing, or in Needle-work.'⁵⁶ In 1786, books for copying flower patterns were offered by Mr Lesley in Winchester 'To Ladies who draw, work embroidery, cloth-work, &c. Particularly Governesses and such who teach those arts.'⁵⁷

⁵³ J. Taylor, *The Needle's Excellency, A New Book Wherin Divers Admirable Works Wrought with the Needle*, 12th edition, (London, 1640)

⁵⁴ *Craftsman* 17 April 1731 and *General Advertising* 11 February 1747, both cited in T. Clayton, *The English Print 1688-1802*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), p.130

⁵⁵ *Daily Post* 9 February 1732, cited in Clayton, *The English Print*, (1997), p.130

⁵⁶ A. Heckle, *The Florist or, An Extensive and Curious Collection of Flowers, for the Imitation of Young Ladies, either in Drawing, or in Needle-work*, (London, 1759)

⁵⁷ *Hampshire Chronicle*, 13 February 1786, p.3, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

Merchants provided the service of needlework designs drawn directly onto the cloth and many such as Butler and Crook of Pall Mall, London sold ‘all kinds of needle-work equipment also patterns and drawings for needlework’.⁵⁸ Needlework emporia including Mrs Newton’s of Long Acre and Mrs Cook’s of High Holborn, which supplied embroidery lessons, sewing and craft equipment as well as needlework designs, flourished in London in the late eighteenth century and pattern drawers continued to offer a service.⁵⁹ Anna Larpent used this service on occasions and visited Miss Lot in 1797 where she saw ‘some very fine work’ and presumably used a pattern from her when she began stitching a gown for her sister that evening.⁶⁰ When the map sampler became a popular teaching tool towards the end of the century, publishing companies such as R. Laurie and J Whittle of 53 Fleet Street printed paper maps for needlewomen to copy and they were one of two cartographers who printed maps directly onto linen or silk fabric for girls to embroider.⁶¹

There are also references to itinerant needlework tutors who travelled the country teaching embroidery and selling needlework patterns or supplying commissioned designs. Elizabeth Mason and her servant Mary Longman appeared at the West Riding Quarter Sessions in 1738. In evidence Elizabeth Mason said that they ‘had travelled up and down the country selling drafts or patters [patterns] for flowering, and teaching young ladies to draw figures for flowering’ and that they arrived in Wakefield in search of such employment.⁶²

The suggestion that needlewomen may have taste as well as needle skills, but no talent for design, was promoted in *The Lady’s Magazine or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex* which was published monthly from 1770 to 1838. The introductory address to the first issue included one of the magazines’ aims:

It is intended in this collection to present the sex with most elegant patterns for the Tambour, Embroidery or every kind of Needlework.... They will find in this Magazine, Price only six-pence, among a Variety of other Copper-Plates, a pattern that would cost them double the money at the Haberdashers; and by the progressive improvement made in the art of pattern-drawing be furnished with drawings that will

⁵⁸ Trade Card collection, SC/GL/TCC/Butler, London Metropolitan Archives

⁵⁹ *The Daily Universal Register*, Saturday 16 September 1786 p1, Thursday 7 December 1786 p1, Monday 2 April 1787 p1, The Times Newspaper Archive, accessed: 25 April 2012

⁶⁰ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 21 October 1797

⁶¹ R. Quinton, *Patterns of Childhood: Samplers from Glasgow Museums*, (London: A&C Black, 2005), pp. 39-40

⁶² QS 1/77/9, West Riding Quarter Session Rolls, October 1738 West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield

shew both the elegance of their taste, and their own perfection in managing the needle.

The magazine continued to provide monthly inserts with patterns for a variety of embroidery projects until the March 1819 issue.⁶³

From surviving embroidered objects, it is clear that many were copied or evolved from generic designs. Marking samplers used standardised alphabets and numbers and inscription samplers drew from a prescribed list of appropriate biblical quotations, hymns or worthy verses. Spot and band samplers featured a familiar group of motifs. More complex samplers often appear to have been created within the school environment with identical or similar designs which are likely to be created by staff within the institution or bought in.⁶⁴ Late eighteenth-century silk pictures follow the same route with repeated popular themes of rural or classical subjects forming the majority of what we see now.

It is not possible to determine how many embroidery projects were original designs created by the maker however. Mrs Delany (1700-1788) was lauded for her drawing skills and her ability to create floral designs for embroidery was noted by Queen Caroline at Court in 1729 and later, for her paper mosaics, by Queen Charlotte in the 1780s.⁶⁵ Lady Barbara North of Glenham Hall was known to have created watercolour designs of flowers and birds for eight chair-seat covers, but outstandingly talented though these two gentlewomen were, they cannot be exceptions to the norm.⁶⁶ Mrs Delany herself is quoted as saying in 1734 that ‘traced work’ was very ugly and out of fashion.⁶⁷ Sarah Hurst drew her own needlework designs and worked hard ‘fancying the pattern’ of her catgut apron.⁶⁸ She provided needlework patterns for her clients in the shop as well as taking in commissions for needlework.

⁶³ *The Lady's Magazine or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex*, , appropriated solely to their Use and Amusement, Vol. 1, (London, 1770), pp.3-4

⁶⁴ Examples of these types of samplers including ones with matching designs can be found in C. Humphrey, *Samplers*, (Cambridge: The Press Syndicate of Cambridge University,1997); C. Humphrey, *Quaker School Girl Samplers from Ackworth*, (Yorkshire: Needleprint and Ackworth School Estates Ltd., 2006), p.39; J. Jarrett, S. Jarrett and R. Scott, *Samplers: Mapped and Charted*, Witney, (Oxfordshire: Witney Antiques, 2005)

⁶⁵ M. Peacock, *The Paper Garden; Mrs Delany Begins her Life's Work at 72*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2011), p.125; see also R. Hayden, *Mrs Delany: Her Life and Flowers*, (London: British Museum Press, 1980) and M. Laird, and A. Weisberg-Roberts, eds., *Mrs Delany and Her Circle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009)

⁶⁶ Cited in A. F. Kendrick, *English Needlework*, (London: A&C Black, 1933), p.155

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.161

⁶⁸ Wednesday 26 September 1759, S. C. Djabri, ed., *The Diaries of Sarah Hurst 1759-1762: Life and Love in Eighteenth century Horsham*, (Stroud: Amberley, 2003), p.111

Anna Larpent was devoted to her garden and when the family gave up their country home in Surrey in 1799, she bemoaned the loss of her garden ‘local Employments must be given up & others found. but I have planted every tree I have watched every shrub I am attached to every plant. I have been so quiet, so pious, so happy here!’⁶⁹ Visits to nurserymen in London were substituted so that she could put her garden in London to rights. She enjoying drawing and painting flowers from nature and applied this talent when working out patterns for her sister and friends, including Mrs Arnold and Mrs Planta, as well as for her own work. Despite never sewing on Sundays, she spent one Sunday morning making out a Carpet pattern for Miss Jeffreys saying:

Not that I have any scruples about working as a Lady works on Sunday – but I consider that the line cannot be too strongly drawn & the day too fully dedicated to spiritual improvement – I wd not therefore by relaxing the ordinance neglect the means of that improvement.⁷⁰

Designing Patchwork

No evidence has been found for the sale of commercial patchwork patterns although the single 1780 reference to a Miss Hudson ‘who teaches the new patchwork in Bath’ raises the issue of whether she supplied patterns as well.⁷¹ Later in the decade, a Miss Hudson announced that she ‘is returned to Bath for the season and continues to teach her Original Cloth and Silk Embroideries as usual at Mrs Gibbon’s, No. 1 Chandos Buildings’ with no mention of ‘the new patchwork’. It is possible that the technique was not actually patchwork or had been re-named cloth embroidery by then. Perhaps the novelty of her new method had worn off in seven years.⁷²

However London needlework emporia offered tuition in and designs for cloth work in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. In 1786, Mrs Newton of Long Acre advertised lessons in cloth work, for two shillings and sixpence (30 pence) or five shillings (60 pence) for ladies to be taught in their own home, while:

⁶⁹ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 3, 25 March 1799

⁷⁰ Larpent, M1016/1, Vol. 2, 19 November 1797

⁷¹ E. Climenson, *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon A.D. 1756 to 1808*, (London, 1899), p.203

⁷² *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, Thursday 11 January 1787, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

Mr N. takes likenesses, which may be prepared in Cloth Work; so that Ladies may hand down to posterity, their likenesses in the very dress they wore at the time. Cloth Work prepared from a variety of fruit, flowers, figures, birds, &c. from Six Shillings upwards.

Her exhibition later in the year featured ‘a (matchless) large and elegant piece of raised embroidery, with a variety of figures, landscapes, flowers, fruit, birds, and animals, in cloth-work’.⁷³

During the following year Sass, an embroiderer and pattern drawer of Upper King Street, Bloomsbury advertised his wife’s lessons in Clothwork, both raised and flat and a close neighbour held an exhibition of needlework offering ‘Cloth-work, raised and flat, from the best designs’.⁷⁴ Mrs Cook at the Fillagree Warehouse in Red Lion Square, Holborn also offered lessons in raised and flat cloth work and she was still advertising this service, with her daughters, eighteen years later in 1804. By then, she was promoting the paper for filigree work ‘at reduced prices’ suggesting that the fashion for this coiled paper work was fading.⁷⁵

The findings from the surviving patchwork objects discussed in Chapter 1, suggest the more frequent use of appliqué techniques towards the end of the eighteenth century. This appliqué was used to create complex figurative designs including some areas with gathered and folded cloth to give a raised effect. Given the advertised offers by needlework emporia of both raised and flat cloth work to produce flower, fruit, figure and bird designs and the suggestion that re-cycled dress fabric could be used to represent the needlewomen themselves, we need to consider whether the term cloth work may allude to what modern needlewomen regard as appliqué. This latter term was not used during the late eighteenth century and did not appear in the larger dictionaries of the day. It should be noted that earlier in the period, the word cloth had been generally associated with woollen fabrics only, but later the connection was loosened so that the term was also employed for cotton and linen.

It was suggested in Chapter 3 that patchwork was a purely domestically-based needlework and the likelihood is that the majority of makers created their designs drawing on

⁷³ *The Universal Daily Register*, Saturday 26 August 1786 and Thursday 7 December 1786, The Times Digital Archive 1785-2006, accessed: 25 April 2012

⁷⁴ *The Daily Universal Register*, 13 January 1787, p.1 and 17 March 1787, p.1, The Times Digital Archive 1785-2006, accessed: 25 April 2012

⁷⁵ *The Daily Universal Register*, 28 November 1786, p.1, The Times Digital Archive 1785-2006, accessed: 25 April 2012; *The Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 24 November 1804, p.1, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

their own, if limited, design skills. The favoured patterns and techniques of embroidery changed over the century influenced by the styles of the period, but the influences of such wide-ranging styles appear to have passed by the majority of the makers of patchwork. Few signs of the Rococo, Palladian, Chinoiserie or Neo-classical aesthetic have been noted in the patchwork patterns of the period. An exception to this can be seen in the Tree of Life designs stitched using the *Borderie perse* appliqué technique. This style of appliqué appeared in the last quarter of the eighteenth century in designs that ape the look of Indian painted and printed chintz palampores imported into Europe during the previous two centuries.

However needlewomen would have noted the dominant design influences when visiting public functions, shopping in the fashionable areas of London or reading magazines of the time and realised that the choices were wide. As an author for *The Ladies Magazine* observed in 1800:

Pay a visit to one of our divinities of the day, and you will fancy yourself transported to the regions of chaos. You will find the stair-case of Italian marble; the antechamber French; the bed Egyptian; the chairs Grecian; the chimney piece Prussian; the candelabra, Etruscan; the vases, Japan; the hangings, Roman; the statues imitations of the antique; and the fortune of the owner, very modern; in a word, the tout-ensemble of the house will be found a complete anachronism.⁷⁶

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, printers of furnishing fabrics offered ranges of printed cloth to reflect the fashionable designs suitable to create household interiors of every style. The furniture and furnishing styles of the elite were available in ‘watered-down’ versions for the gentry and middling and a woman with aspirations would have found fabric to be one of the cheaper ways to show her taste and fashionability. The Bannister Hall printworks, near Preston, Lancashire, was regarded as the leading producer of block-printed furnishing chintzes in the first twenty years of the nineteenth century. It produced an eclectic range of patterns demonstrating Greek, Egyptian, Pompeian, Chinese and Indian design influences. The works supplied furnishings to leading London linen drapers including George Anstey and Co., Kinsey and Chambers and Richard Ovey of Covent Garden.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ *The Lady's Magazine*, August 1800, p.480

⁷⁷ Examples of prints produced for these three London shops can be seen in a patchwork coverlet, database 2, Private collection, see Fig. 34

As described in Chapter 1, the majority of the designs on surviving early to mid eighteenth-century patchwork were based on a square grid. While some, such as the silk patchwork coverlet dated 1718, include square blocks of figurative and geometric designs, most show a composition derived from simpler square blocks containing half-square (isosceles) triangles (see Fig. 14). These designs are reminiscent of square and triangle grid patterns seen in *The Needle's Excellency* and the patchwork may be indicative of a basic style that survived from the previous century (see Fig. 49).⁷⁸ Eighteenth-century women lived in a four-sided world of verticals, horizontals and 90-degree (square) corners and designs based upon a square grid allowed the practical needlewoman to work with familiar shapes using basic household equipment; she would have been able to measure out squares of paper for template pieces with the help of a yard stick or a measuring tape. Needlewomen could draft isosceles triangles easily by folding paper or fabric squares diagonally to make either patchwork templates or fabric patches.

The figurative designs seen in the 1718 coverlet consist of figures, animals, birds and flowers. The figurative patterns are likely to have been influenced by the genre of sampler making, with which the maker would have been familiar and the presence of so many domesticated animals and birds such as dogs, cats and geese and game including deer, rabbit and partridge are indications of the likely rural life and occupations of the family. Only two non-native animals are represented in the patchwork; a lion and unicorn are positioned as armorial supporters below the centre star design. They may have been chosen as a loyalist symbol for a patchwork made only three years after the Jacobite rising of 1715 (see Fig. 13).

Much of the embroidery made during the century features floral motifs and needlewomen such as Delany and Larpent sourced or drew patterns for flowers. Such designs appear occasionally in patchwork. Tulip patterns can be seen in the 1718 coverlet and a coverlet dated 1765 features flowers and flower pots (see Fig. 23).⁷⁹ A mosaic patchwork coverlet which was likely to have been made in the 1790s contains small bunches of flowers (see detail in Fig. 55). The coverlet dated 1797, discussed previously in Chapter 3, includes images of tulips, roses, lilies and pansies (see Fig. 27).

The most direct connection to floral embroidery designs can be seen in two late-eighteenth century patchwork coverlets, which contain complicated patterns of pots of

⁷⁸ Taylor, *The Needle's Excellency*, 1640, pp.33-4

⁷⁹ Coverlet dated 1718, database 59, Collection of The Quilters' Guild of the British Isles 2000-11-A; coverlet dated 1765, database 8, Collection of Huis Doorn, The Netherlands, Schloss Berlin No. 16

flowers and vines (see Figs. 50 and 51).⁸⁰ The pots of flowers contain recognisable flower varieties including sweet peas *Lathyrus cupani* and L. ‘Painted Lady’, lilies, daffodils, pansies and roses reminiscent of naturalistic flower embroidery. These designs of flower vines with ribbon bows can be compared with the vine designs often seen framing silk pictures and map samplers of the period (see Figs. 52 and 53). The similarity of these two patchwork coverlets and their connection to late-eighteenth century embroidery suggests that in this case the patchwork and embroidery designs may have had a common source. The newspaper advertisements for London needlework emporia of the period included references to designs of flowers, fruit and birds for cloth-work and it could also be speculated that such a design was adapted for use in patchwork.

Other late eighteenth century patchwork also reveal designs with some connected components, which could suggest that the pieces were made by needlewomen who had family, social or school relationships. Communal work would allow the copying of design elements from one needlework project to another and may explain the similarities to be seen in two coverlets dated 1797 and 1799 containing figurative blocks depicting fashionable personal and household accessories including sewing equipment, children’s toys and garden implements. Significantly both contain patchwork maps, which are very like the commercially produced designs for map samplers of the period (for the 1797 coverlet see Fig. 27).⁸¹

A change in patchwork styles during the last two decades of the eighteenth century was noted in Chapter 1. Patchwork designs appeared to become more geometrically complex with the hexagon matching the square as the shape of choice towards the end of the century (hexagons can be seen in Fig. 37 and Fig. 54). The novelty of the interlocking hexagon pattern and the ease of sewing the shape, given the wide angles of its points, would have appealed to needlewomen, but they would not have been so familiar with the geometry of six-sided shapes and 120-degree angle corners which would require effort to make the shape fit into a rectangular bedcover. The accompanying taste for star, dahlia or mariner’s compass designs either as centre designs or, in exceptional cases, as a series of variations across the

⁸⁰ Patchwork coverlet, database 163, Private collection; fragments of a patchwork coverlet, database 7, Private collection; see B. Long, ‘Sibling Cousin or Friend?: Considering the Relationship between Two Late Eighteenth-century Mosaic Patchwork Coverlets’, *Quilt Studies*, Issue 10, (2009), pp.89-112

⁸¹ Coverlet dated 1797, database 113 and coverlet dated 1799, database 15; see J. Barber, ‘Fabric as Evidence: Unravelling the Meaning of a Late Eighteenth Century Patchwork Coverlet’, *Quilt Studies*, 3, (2001), p26

body of the design was probably influenced by the presence of such shapes in other decorative arts inspired by the neo-classical style (see Figs. 28, 55, 56, and 57). The compass patterns, in particular, relate to the imagery generated following Nelson's maritime victories during the French revolutionary wars.

These shapes cannot be created by merely folding and cutting paper templates from a square; the hexagon cannot be accurately folded in this way whilst a compass pattern of many points could be folded, but the thickness of the paper on the folds would destroy all accuracy. To draft such patterns, which could then be cut up for templates, requires a practical knowledge of geometry which did not feature in the 'standard' female schooling. However it is possible that, in some cases, male connections of needlewomen had the required knowledge and would draft the patterns for them. Indeed Elizabeth Grant recalls that, whilst staying at University College, Oxford with her uncle and aunt in 1810, she saw her aunt cut up papers for patchwork using a tin template made from a hexagon that the Dean had drawn for her using a great array of compasses.⁸²

The context for mathematical education, especially geometry, in the first half of the century was based on the classical education received by boys in public or grammar schools and dissenter academies, where they would follow the works of Euclid and a number of texts translated from Greek including *The Elements of Euclid* and *The English Euclid* circulated amongst classical scholars.⁸³ But, as Bryant in her study of London education said, 'The appetites of London, its mercantile, finance and business houses, its ports, its government offices, were shaping a new curriculum.'⁸⁴ Mathematical teachers were trained and mathematical schools were established to teach navigation and surveying and early text books such as *The Mariner's New Kalendar*, *The Carpenter's Joynt-Rule*, *The Measurer's Guide Enlarged* and *The Builder's Dictionary* were either theoretical explanations of geometry or complex instruction books used to calculate distance, direction, quantity or volume.⁸⁵

There was a gradual change in emphasis in boys' education as the century progressed toward a modern science-based curriculum. Mathematics and scientific topics were

⁸² Cited in S. Groves, *The History of Needlework Tools and Accessories*, (Feltham, Middlesex: Country Life Books, 1966), p.66

⁸³ E. Scarborough, *The English Euclid, Being The First Six Elements of Geometry, Translated out of the Greek, with Annotations and useful Supplements*, (London, 1705); A. Jacquet, *The Elements of Euclid: with selected theorems out of Archimedes*, (London, 1728)

⁸⁴ M. Bryant, *The London Experience of Secondary Education*, (London: The Athlone Press, 1986), p.124

⁸⁵ N. Colson, *The Mariner's New Kalendar; Containing the Principles of Arithmetic and Geometry*, (Dublin, 1706); J. Brown, *The Carpenters Joynt-rule fitted with Lines Variously and Generally Useful in Measuring Magnitudes and Time.*, (London, 1706); J. Barker, *The Measurer's Guide Enlarg'd: or, the Whole Art of Measuring made Short, Plain and Easy*, (London, 1718); Anon., *The Builder's Dictionary: or, Gentleman's and Architects Companion*, (London, 1734)

increasingly taught to improve the intellect rather than as part of a vocational training and this was reflected in a different type of practical textbook that began to appear alongside the instruction books for navigation and surveying. An early book *Geometry Made Easy* described how to construct geometric shapes, but without diagrams.⁸⁶ However Doctor Charles Hutton's *Treatise on Mensuration* was a more practical book beginning with geometrical definitions and moving on to instructions for drafting geometric shapes, including the hexagon.⁸⁷ In 1786, Hutton followed this with a simpler book, *The Compendious Measurer*, as an alternative to the *Treatise* explaining:

It has, however, been often represented to me, by Tutors and others, that the great size and price of that work, as well as the very scientific manner in which it is formed, prevent it from being so generally useful in schools, and to practical measurers, as a more compendious and familiar little book might be, which they could put in the hands of their pupils, as a work containing all the practical rules of that art, in a form proper for them to copy from, and unmixed with such geometrical and algebraical demonstrations as occur in the larger work.⁸⁸

Clearly intended to be more accessible, the *Compendious Measurer* provides, in the practical geometry section, instructions for the construction of all the common shapes such as hexagon, octagon, triangle and pentagon.

John Bonnycastle, author of *The Scholar's Guide to Arithmetic*, published *An Introduction to Mensuration, and Practical Geometry* in 1782 saying in his introduction that:

In school-books, and those designed for the use of mere novices, it has always appeared to me, that plain and concise rules, with proper exercises, are entirely sufficient for the purpose. In science, as well as in morals, example will ever enforce and illustrate precept; and for this reason an operation, wrought out in full length, will be found of more service to beginners than all the tedious directions and observations

⁸⁶ J. L. Cowley, *Geometry Made Easy or, A New and Methodical Explanation of the Elements of Geometry*, (London, 1752)

⁸⁷ C. Hutton, *A Treatise on Mensuration both in Theory and Practice*, (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1770)

⁸⁸ C. Hutton, *The Compendious Measurer; Being a Brief, Yet Comprehensive Treatise on Mensuration and Practical Geometry. With an Introduction to Decimal and Duodecimal Arithmetic Adapted for the Use of Schools and Practice*, (London, 1786)

that can possibly be given them. From constant experience I have been confirmed in this idea; and it is in pursuance of it that I have formed the plan of this publication.⁸⁹

True to his word, Bonnycastle devoted the first section of his book to exercises with diagrams related to constructing geometric shapes including ‘Problem XXI In a given circle to inscribe an equilateral triangle, an hexagon, or a dodecagon’ and ‘Problem XXII To describe a square, or an octagon, in a given circle’⁹⁰ The fifth edition of Bonnycastle’s book appeared in 1798, suggesting a continuing need for such practical primers; a trend exemplified by another book *Practical Geometry*.⁹¹

The influence of a broader-based curriculum spread into some girls’ schools toward the end of the century and larger, more successful girls’ schools offered a wider list of topics. Erasmus Darwin had advanced ideas on girls’ education in boarding schools, which he used when promoting a school run by his two illegitimate daughters in 1797. He suggested that history, geography, branches of the natural sciences, mathematics, chemistry, applied sciences and shorthand were necessary subjects to be taught, but it is uncertain how influential his thinking was amongst school proprietors.⁹²

Skedd, in her study of the expansion of girls schooling in the second half of the eighteenth-century, noted a general widening of a basic curriculum of reading and needlework, but had to move outside the county of Oxfordshire to find references to the teaching of science and mathematics in schools.⁹³ Mrs Margaret Bryan ran schools in London from 1795 to 1816 and used lectures on astronomy and mathematics, which she delivered at her boarding school, as the basis for *A Compendious System of Astronomy, in a Course of Familiar Lectures; also Trigonometrical and Celestial Problems* and published *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*.⁹⁴ Mrs Florian modelled her curriculum for her school in Leytonstone on her husband’s *Course of the Sciences and Philosophy* and offered elements of geometry and trigonometry.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ J. Bonnycastle, *An Introduction to Mensuration, and Practical Geometry with Notes, Containing the Reason of Every Rule, Concisely and Clearly Demonstrated*, (London, 1782)

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp.26-7

⁹¹ I. Landmann, *Practical Geometry; for the use of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich*, (London, 1798)

⁹² E. Darwin, , *A Plan for the Conduct of Female Education in Boarding Schools*, (London, 1797)

⁹³ S. Skedd, ‘Women Teachers and the Expansion of Girls Schooling in England 1760-1820’ in H. Barker and E. Chalus, eds., *Gender in Eighteenth Century England*, (London: Longman, 1997), p.121

⁹⁴ Cited in J. Kamm, *Hope Deferred: Girl’s Education in English History*, (London: Methuen, 1965), p.141

⁹⁵ Cited in Hans, *New Trends in Education*, (1951), pp.204-205

The references to teaching of mathematics in girls' schools are few however and most women with a widening interest in the sciences, thirsty for further knowledge and exposed to a limited curriculum in school, would have resorted to becoming autodidacts at home. They sought help from textbooks such as Hutton's *The Compendious Measurer* or Bonnycastle's *An Introduction to Mensuration* or made use of public lectures on natural philosophy and mathematics such as those given by the Professor of Perspective and Geometry at the Royal Academy of Arts from 1768 and Dr. Hutton in Newcastle in the early 1760s.⁹⁶

Hutton was editor of *The Ladies Diary* (founded 1704) from 1773 to 1818, which had a readership of men and women including schoolchildren. It was a source of mathematical information with contributions from well-known mathematicians and solutions to geometrical and mathematical problems that were sent in by readers. Miss Polly Lee and Miss Maria Middleton both made use of the problem pages; Miss Lee answering a query about problems in plane geometry in the Companion to the Diary for 1779.⁹⁷ Other journals with a similar style included *Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and Arts* and *Gentleman's Diary or Mathematical Repository* running from 1741, which included mathematical instruction as well as problems and solutions.

Given the availability of such publications later in the century and access to teaching via some schools or by public lecture, it is clear that women of higher levels of society may have become more aware of geometry as a subject and had the opportunity to acquire a degree of knowledge of it. Sabrina Sidney, an academic disappointment to her adoptive father, Thomas Day, wrote to Richard Edgeworth in 1769, 'I know how to make a circle and an equilateral triangle – I know the cause of night and day, winter and summer'.⁹⁸ Anna Larpent worked out geometry problems with her sons. Remembering the tuition from a visiting teaching assistant, Ellen Stock recalled that 'Of my Arithmetic I was very fond and advanced rapidly. Mensuration was quite delightful' so that she would have drafted the hexagon shapes for her quilt with ease.⁹⁹ The daughter of a Huguenot silk weaver, Jane Griffin was dissatisfied by the limited formal education which she had received at her boarding school in Chelsea and, at the age of nineteen in 1811, drew up a plan for self education in order to fill her time profitably and improve her mind. Her detailed timetable

⁹⁶ Hutton reference cited in Hans, *New Trends*, (1951), p.146

⁹⁷ Miss Middleton cited in Hans, *New Trends*, (1951), p.206 and Miss Lee in R. Burrow, , *A Companion to the Ladies and Gentlemens Diary for the Year 1779*, (1779), p.2

⁹⁸ R. L. Edgeworth, *Memoirs of Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Esq. Begun by Himself and Concluded by his Daughter, Maria Edgeworth*, Vol. 1, (London, 1820), p.225

⁹⁹ Hall, *Miss Weeton's Journal*, Vol. 1, (1969), p.14

included an hour a week spent on ‘the acquiring of the principles of Geometry or the practice of Arithmetic’¹⁰⁰ Most would not take the interest a great deal further, unlike the eminent mathematical autodidacts Mary Somerville, née Fairfax (1780-1872) and Sophie Germain (1776-1831) in France, but, since many had undergone extensive training in drawing and perspective, the construction of geometrical shapes sufficient for their needlework would not be too great a challenge.¹⁰¹

The earliest dated British example of hexagon patchwork recorded in this study is thought to have been made by Anna Ruggles, the wife of John Noxon, a glazier from Gloucestershire. Her educational background is unknown and it is not clear how she developed the skills to draw her templates. However it would appear that she struggled with the geometry. By failing to combine effectively her design of repeating hexagon rosettes with a more complex centre, she had to resort to unusual, offset side borders (see Fig.54).¹⁰²

The hexagon patchwork coverlet stitched by Sarah Ewalt Spencer of Bedford Township, Pennsylvania, USA in 1794 does not display such awkwardness; she appears to have been confident in the use of the hexagon shape. The patchwork contains fabrics said to have been connected with influential women of the day including Martha Washington, Dolly Madison and Mrs Alexander Hamilton, wife of the first Secretary of the Treasury. Her husband was described as an innkeeper, surveyor and building contractor and listed in records as a ‘gentleman’. It is very possible that she had social connections with the political elite of Philadelphia. She may have been in a position to learn the technique of drafting hexagon templates as well as acquiring the scraps of donated dress fabric from such connections or drawing on her husband’s skills.¹⁰³

If it is accepted that girls in the later eighteenth century could acquire a practical knowledge of geometry either by social contact, in school or, more likely, by self-education at home, it is possible to understand the context in which patchwork coverlets containing numerous, complex, geometric patterns such as the George III reviewing His Troops patchwork coverlet or the Cheltenham museum’s patchwork coverlet, were designed (see

¹⁰⁰ P. Russell, ‘An Improper Education?: Jane Griffin’s Pursuit of Self-improvement and ‘Truth’ 1811-1812’, *The Journal of the History of Education Society*, Vol. 33, 3, (2004), p.253

¹⁰¹ For a detailed overview of eighteenth-century amateur art, the encouragement of women’s participation and accomplished women see A. Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), chapter 4 and 5, p127-223

¹⁰² Coverlet database 139, International Quilt Study Centre and Museum, NE, USA, 2008.040.0140

¹⁰³ Coverlet, Wadsworth Atheneum, CT, USA, 1982.165; I am grateful to Lynne Z. Bassett for this information

Figs. 28 and 57).¹⁰⁴ Recent work has focussed on the pictorial panels around the edge of the George III coverlet citing print sources for their designs, but little consideration has been given to the centre containing numerous circular patterns.¹⁰⁵ Thought to have been made by Jane Pizar, the Cheltenham museum coverlet has a complicated mariner's compass-style circle at the centre and is surrounded by square blocks of, mostly, circular star patterns. The sets of patterns in both coverlets could only have been drafted using a pair of compasses, a ruler and set square or protractor. Spurred by an enthusiasm for practical geometry and a newly-discovered drafting skill, the makers of such coverlets may have created variations on a theme sufficient to fill an entire patchwork bedcover.

An increasing interest in geometrical design for patchwork for a short period at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries could be compared with the rise of shellwork in the middle of the eighteenth century. In this case, Sharpe has suggested that this was based on an interest in classical mythology, the vogue for Rococo and an enthusiasm for natural sciences and seems to have waned when shells became cheaper and easier to obtain.¹⁰⁶ In a similar way, it can be argued that complex geometric patterns in patchwork were popular amongst educated needlewomen until the vogue for other styles of embroidery such as whitework took over.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the practical ways in which needlewomen went about preparing for their next patchwork project. It examined how they sourced their materials and what skills or experience influenced the choice of patchwork pattern and design.

Patchwork was a decorative craft that did not require the purchase of much equipment and materials, unlike other fashionable pastimes practised in the period such as jappanning, shellwork or filigree. The sewing equipment, fabric and paper could be found within the household although ambitious patchwork projects would probably require extra fabric to be sourced from hawkers and fabric sales, in discounted bundles of pieces to be found in haberdashers and linen drapers or as full-price yardage.

¹⁰⁴ Coverlet database 11, Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum T9-1962 and coverlet database 46, Collection of Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museums 1940.339 CHE50847

¹⁰⁵ J. Riding, 'His Constant Penelope: Epic Tales and Domestic Narratives' in Prichard, *Quilts 1700-2010*, pp.156-61

¹⁰⁶ K. Sharpe, *Conchology and Creativity: The Rise of Shellwork in Eighteenth-century England*, MA dissertation in *The History of Design V&A/RCA*, (1995)

While women relied upon commercial patterns for much of their embroidery, it is argued that the designs for patchwork were created at home and were un-influenced by the major design styles of the period. Only later in the century into the early nineteenth century does it appear that there was a fancy for geometric patchwork patterns, in particular the hexagon, which followed the neo-classical aesthetic. Improvements in girls' education together with a wider availability of geometry primers may have contributed to this interest and provided the knowledge to enable such patterns to be drawn.

Chapter 6 The Eighteenth-Century Language of Patchwork

When Barack Obama chose to use the following words during his 2009 American Presidential inauguration speech ‘For we know that our patchwork heritage is a strength not a weakness. We are a nation of Christians and Muslims, Jew and Hindus – and non-believers. We are shaped by every language and culture, drawn from every end of this earth...’ he was confident in the knowledge that his audience would understand his meaning. He accepted that the country where the patchwork quilt is regarded as a cultural icon would appreciate the positive way he used patchwork to describe the mix of people that make up the USA.¹ In a similar way in the eighteenth century, Jonathan Swift understood the widespread familiarity with the term and, when writing *Gulliver’s Travels*, knew he could describe Gulliver’s clothes made by Lilliputian tailors in a way that his readers would understand saying they ‘looked like the Patch-Work made by the Ladies in England, only that mine were all of a colour’.²

This chapter considers the eighteenth century understanding of patchwork and the use of this term for a decorative needlework technique by all levels of society. Drawing on a variety of documentary sources including newspapers, dictionaries and other publications, it examines how patchwork was embedded into the language of the period and evolved from its literal use in the needlework sphere to serve as the feminine ideal of domestic efficiency and economy.

Late seventeenth and eighteenth century British philosophers wrote extensively concerning the appropriate use of the English language in philosophical discourse. Influenced by Aristotelian thinking, they believed that language should be clear and direct since ornamental language affected people’s reasoning and understanding.³ Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) promoted the literal use of words and demonstrated his mistrust of figurative language by describing one of the abuses of language as when men ‘use words metaphorically; that is,

¹ Obama, B.H. *Presidential Inauguration Speech* 19 January 2009

http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/Americas/obama_inauguration/7840646.stm , accessed: 11 March 2009

² J. Swift, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon and Then a Captain of Several Ships*, I.vi., (London, 1726) p.109

³ The historiography that considers these beliefs includes I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965); M. Cohen, *Sensible Words Linguistic Practice in England 1640-1785*, (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977); M. Johnson, ed., *Philosophical Perspectives on Metaphor*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1981)

in other senses that they are ordained from, and thereby deceive others'.⁴ In his *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* John Locke (1632-1704) continued the criticism that figurative speech was an abuse of the language saying '...all the artificial and figurative applications of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement; and so indeed are perfect cheats.'⁵

Despite this high-minded stance which continued to be adopted by philosophers throughout the long eighteenth century, it is clear that language in the period was coloured by the use of figurative speech. Indeed more recent work has shown that these very philosophers were guilty of making use of metaphor in their writing.⁶ Cohen, in his analysis of eighteenth century linguistic practice, examined the literary developments of the period and suggested that the 'plain-speaking rigor of the Royal Society' in connecting words to things was overtaken by a move to associate words with ideas. Figurative language was at the forefront of the move.⁷ This chapter considers the use of patchwork in the figurative language of the day, which was found in literature, drama, critical review, political debate and theoretical discourse. In many texts *patchwork* was utilised as a positive and negative simile and metaphor, prompting an examination of the apparent mobility of the term and the possible catalysts for these different interpretations.

The Literal Meaning and Use of Patchwork

In his 1755 dictionary, Dr Johnson defined *patchwork* as 'Work made by sewing small pieces of different colours interchangeably together.'. This description of needlework, which consisted of fabric pieces stitched to make up a larger whole, would appear to have been understood throughout much of the period.⁸ Johnson's was the most well-known example of a large body of work that was devoted to the explanation and grammatical use of common words throughout the eighteenth century, beginning with early examples composed by Bulloker, whose tenth edition was published in 1707, Bailey in 1730 and Dyche in 1735.⁹

⁴ T. Hobbes, *Leviathan, or The Matter, Forme and Power of Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*, Part 1, chapter IV, (London, 1651)

⁵ J. Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Book III, Chapter 10, (London, 1690)

⁶ S. Forrester, 'Theories of Metaphor in Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century British Philosophy', *Literature Compass*, (2010), Vol. 7, Issue 8, pp.610-25

⁷ Cohen, *Sensible Words*, (1977)

⁸ S. Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are Deduced from their Originals*, Vol. 2, (London, 1755)

⁹ J. Bulloker, *The English Expositor Improv'd: Being a Complete Dictionary*, 10th edition, (London, 1707); N. Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum: or a more Compleat Universal etymological English Dictionary than any*

Eighteenth-century lexicographers were notorious plagiarists however, often stealing whole sections of a previously published work to add to their own dictionary and, when *patchwork* appeared, it was defined in very similar words. Bulloker and Bailey did not feature patchwork and Dyche failed to list the word in the first sixteen editions of his work. Johnson's work seems to have influenced some later authors including Barlow whose patchwork entry said 'work made of a variety of different colours' and Sheridan who stole the Johnson definition in its entirety.¹⁰ Dyche in his 1794 improved edition of his dictionary finally described *patchwork* as 'work made by sewed shreds or small pieces of different colours interchangeably together'. Entick provided some originality by using 'pieces of patched work sewed together' and Ann Fisher may have offered some personal experience of the work when she wrote that patchwork was 'pieces of divers colours sewed together in figures'.¹¹ Marriott used the description 'work made of different colours' and Perry's entry was limited to two words 'variegated work'.¹²

While these lexicographers may have provided definitions of *patchwork* that would relate to the surviving objects in this survey, its close relationship with other nouns and verbs demonstrates that there is some confusion concerning its origins and use. Browne has highlighted that early in the period the terminology is 'problematic' and speculated that the early use of patchwork may, in part, relate either to a method called paning which was used for bed furnishings from at least the early sixteenth century or to an appliqué technique.¹³ The former method used joined panes or pieces of fabric of different type or colour and could be regarded as a precursor of the eighteenth-century patchwork term. Dyche suggested that *pane* is an old English word signifying 'a Part of some whole Thing' and Dr Johnson also included pane in his dictionary and ascribed two meanings. The first provided the usual description of a square of glass, but the second was 'a piece mixed in variegated works with

Extant, (London, 1730); T. Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary; Peculiarly Calculated for the Use and Improvement of Such as are Unacquainted with the Learned Languages*, second edition, (London, 1737)

¹⁰ Rev. F. Barlow, *The Complete English Dictionary: or, a General Repository of the English language*, (London, 1772); T. Sheridan, *A Complete Dictionary of the English Language, both with Regard to Sound and Meaning*, (London, 1789);

¹¹ Rev. J. Entick, *The New Spelling Dictionary, Teaching to Write and Pronounce the English Tongue with Ease and Propriety*, (Dublin, 1770), p.297; A. Fisher *An Accurate New Spelling Dictionary, and Expositor of the English Language*, (London, 1773)

¹² C. Marriott, *The New Royal English Dictionary; or, Complete Library of Grammatical Knowledge*, (London, 1780); W. Perry, *A General Dictionary of the English Language*, (London, 1795)

¹³ C. Browne, 'Making and Using Quilts in the Eighteenth-century', in S. Pritchard, ed., *Quilts 1700-2010: Hidden Histories, Untold Stories*, (London: V&A Publishing, 2010), p24,

other pieces' which suggests a relationship with the paning technique that Browne considered.¹⁴

Since some early inventory references to *patchwork* relate to items of furniture such as stools and couches, Browne suggested that appliqué would be more suitable for upholstery than patchwork. Appliqué was a decorative embroidery technique, which was used mainly in professional embroidery workshops in the early part of the eighteenth century, and uses pieces of fabric in a variety of shapes applied to a background cloth, often with further embroidery embellishment. Because it is stitched using a foundation cloth, it could provide more stability when used for upholstery than an item made up of joined sections of cloth. However simple patchwork designs may have been robust enough for upholstery, as seen in a portrait of *John Hamilton Mortimer with a student* (c.1765) where Mortimer is seated on an upholstered chair with the seat and back containing a chequer-board pattern of repeating squares (see fig. 47).¹⁵

Early definitions of the noun *patch* by Bailey and Dyche clearly indicate that they regard it as a scrap or piece of fabric applied to another cloth in order to mend it, although Dyche also notes the pieces of black silk worn on women's faces. Neither mention *patch* being used decoratively in appliqué. Bailey explains the use of the term as a verb to describe the mending of cloth with patches. Both Bailey and Dyche ascribe a number of meanings to *piece* as well as the usual definition relating to a part or portion of a whole, but they define the verb *to piece* as to join together and Dyche specifically relates the verb to 'sew or join Cloth, Wood, &c. Together for various purposes'.¹⁶

From these early dictionary entries it could be assumed that the more logical description of the needlework technique that is the subject of this study would be *piecework*, but from the beginning of the eighteenth century, the documentary evidence suggests that *patchwork* was used as the term for the technique of joining together fabric pieces. When Mary Smith was accused of the theft of a piece of silk patchwork and a snuff box at the Old Bailey in 1712, she was acquitted after some witnesses said that they helped her make the patchwork and others gave her some of the fabric pieces for it.¹⁷ Fourteen years later at the

¹⁴ Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, (1737); Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, (1755)

¹⁵ After John Hamilton Mortimer, *John Hamilton Mortimer with a Student*, (c.1765), National Portrait Gallery, NPG 234

¹⁶ Bailey, *Dictionarium Britannicum*, (1730); Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, (1737)

¹⁷ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1712 trial of Mary Smith (t17120910-27), www.oldbaileyonline.org accessed: 24 November 2008

same Court, Mary Rich was found guilty of stealing a large number of pieces of silk that ‘...were such as were used for Patchwork, &c.’¹⁸ In the same year Swift published *Gulliver’s Travels* and clearly associated the joining together of fabric pieces to make a larger whole when he made the connection between *patchwork* and the way the Lilliputian tailors joined cloth to make a length large enough for Gulliver’s clothes.

Throughout the period *pieces* was used far more than *patches* to describe the fabric components of the work. Reports of cases covering the theft of lengths and scraps of fabric, which were heard at the Old Bailey, regularly used the term *pieces* and it was less often that *patches* was used instead. In 1757 Sarah Brett was indicted for stealing goods including two bed quilts and tried to offer a defence by saying that one quilt had about two hundred pieces in it, which she had sewn herself. The original owner gave evidence saying ‘...they were not properly patches, but it was at first made of divers pieces’ suggesting that she saw a clear division between a patch used for repair and a piece used in patchwork.¹⁹ However the official record of a trial in 1782 described a stolen counterpane as ‘made of cotton and linen patches’ thereby demonstrating a continued confusion since Parson James Woodforde also recorded that he bought fabric to use in patchwork for his niece and noted in his diary that he purchased ‘1 yard and ½ of Patches for Nancy 0.3.6 [three shillings and six pence]’ in 1791.²⁰

This apparent mobile use of the two terms is reflected in the lexicography of the second half of the century. Johnson expanded the meanings of the noun *patch* to include ‘A piece inserted in mosaic or variegated work’ and added to the definition of the verb to include ‘To make up of shreds or different pieces’. He gave eleven meanings for a *piece* including the first ‘a patch’ and second ‘a part of a whole, a fragment’ and defined the verb as ‘To enlarge by addition of a piece’ or ‘To join, to unite’.²¹ Later in the century the more frequent use of *piece* may also be due to the fact that among the fabric imports from India was a cloth called patch which Montgomery in her textile reference book described as ‘possibly the same as panches, an Indian printed cloth, or possibly derived from Indian pitcharies’ meaning ‘coloured calicoes’.²²

¹⁸ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, December 1726 trial of Mary Rich (t17261207-57), accessed: 24 November 2008

¹⁹ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, July 1757 trial of Sarah Brett (t17570713-44), accessed: 29 April 2011

²⁰ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, July 1782 trial of Hannah Smith (17820703-14), accessed: 3 February 2009; Tuesday 25 October 1791, J. Beresford, *The Diary of a Country Parson*, Vol. III, 1788-92, (London: Oxford University Press, 1927), p.308

²¹ Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 2, (1755)

²²F. Montgomery, *Textiles in America 1650-1870*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), p.318

It would seem that in the early nineteenth century *piece* continued to be the preferred term. Eleanor Flaherty and Mary Langford were accused of stealing forty pieces of cloth for patchwork, although Flaherty claimed that she had bought them since ‘you can buy pieces of calico in Rag-fair’.²³ James Adamson was found guilty of a similar crime of stealing a large number of pieces of calico in short lengths, which the court was told ‘...that in all markets they are publicly sold as remnants to make patchwork.’²⁴ When the Austen sisters ran out of fabric for their latest patchwork project in 1811, Jane wrote to Cassandra ‘Have you remembered to collect peices [sic] for the Patchwork? – We are now at a stand still.’²⁵ The un-published diary for 1818 of Hannah M. Wilson, later Crosthwaite, set out her personal accounts and described how she spent her quarterly allowance where she records that she bought pieces for patchwork.²⁶

Despite the ongoing variation of the terms used to describe the fabric components of the work, the use of the word *patchwork* to describe the technique continued in writing throughout the period. In the early eighteenth century it was associated with fashionable needlework for the higher ranks. Baker in his 1703 play *Tunbridge Walks* portrayed the effeminate fop, Mr Maiden, currying favour with the ladies by advising them on their dress and helping them make their patchwork and five years later introduced his comedy *Hampstead Heath* saying ‘...Patchwork is the Fashion of this Age’.²⁷

Swift in his *Directions to Servants in General*, written in the early eighteenth century, gave advice to waiting maids that they should no longer expect to be given cast-off clothing by their employers. That was because of the fashion ‘amongst ladies’ for cutting up old dresses to cover chairs or to use for patchwork.²⁸ The patchwork, which Gulliver was compared with the work of the tailors of Lilliput, was also described by Swift as being made by ladies.²⁹

As discussed in Chapter 3, patchwork was owned and made by all levels of society. Evidence to be found in inventories revealed that patchwork was made by women from the upper middling and genteel classes, who were defined as ladies, and patchwork objects

²³ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, April 1804 trial of Eleanor Flaherty and Mary Langford (t18040411-40), accessed: 24 November 2008

²⁴ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, September 1807 trial of James Adamson (t18070916-67), accessed: 24 November 2008

²⁵ Friday 31 May 1811, D. Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p.191

²⁶ Hannah M. Wilson diary for 1818, un-published Norrington family papers

²⁷ T. Baker, . *Tunbridge Walks: or, the Yeoman of Kent*, (London, 1703), p.21; T. Baker, *Hampstead Heath*, (London, 1708), Prologue

²⁸ J. Swift, *Directions to Servants in General*, (London, 1745), p.81

²⁹ Swift, *Travels*, I.vi., (1726), p.109

feature amongst the furnishings in higher status houses throughout the period, but a notable shift can be seen in the writing of the second half of the century. Patchwork no longer reflected a pastime of the classes who had time to spend on ornate needlework, but was used as an embodiment of domestic economy, efficiency and practicality. Patchwork projects were part of a woman's domestic sewing regime when she regularly made use of recycled household fabrics as well as purchasing cheaper fabric pieces for her work. This chimed very well with the ideal of the moral and capable housewife who was devoted to her sewing skills and thrifty in her practice, which was promoted in conduct literature that focussed on the correct upbringing for girls and the required training for future wives and mothers.

William Cowper reflected this approach when he wrote a poem in 1790 titled 'To Mrs King, On her kind present to the Author, A patchwork counterpane, Of her own making'. Cowper complimented her on her thriftiness and 'the care and kindness of a Lady fair who deigns to dress his bed' (see Fig. 26).³⁰ In *The Vicar of Lansdowne*, the vicar's wife recommends her niece as a good catch as a wife to a potential suitor by listing her attributes and 'beside her external perfections, her internal worth, her taste for works of ingenuity, she is...the best hand in the world at a piece of patch-work and none can surpass her in the design of a fire-screen'.³¹

In the midst of one of George III's periods of ill-health, the *Morning Chronicle* reported that 'During the late severe weather, the Queen has amused herself in making patch-work' while the princesses 'exercised their talents in paintings and etchings'. During these periods of illness, the position of the King and his family were frequently threatened by followers of his son and Court officials worked hard to manipulate a positive image for the Royal family. The officials may well have chosen to build on the country's perception of the family by picturing the Queen industriously working her patchwork rather than a more frivolous occupation.³²

³⁰ Coverlet, database 232, The Cowper and Newton Museum, OLNCM.2657; Letter to Mrs King, Saturday 14 August 1790, J. King and C. Ryskamp, *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, Vol. III, Letters 1787-1831, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), pp. 406-7; see N. Durbridge, *Cowper's Counterpane: A Material World*, (Olney, Bucks: The Cowper and Newton Museum, 2012), available at: http://www.cowperandnewtonmuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/mw_counterpane.pdf, accessed: 6 August 2012

³¹ M. R. Dalton, *The Vicar of Lansdowne or, Country Quarters, A Tale*, Vol. II, (London, 1789), p.240

³² *Morning Chronicle*, 18 January 1811, p4, The British Newspaper Archive, <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>, accessed: 9 May 2012

The higher social classes frequently held an idealised expectation of the poor. The development of an optimistic image of plebeian households from the later eighteenth century onwards, which was typified by the sentimental overtones of rural genre pictures produced by artists like George Morland, ensured that the sensibilities of the elite audience were not upset, but masked the true conditions experienced within the cottage or garret. Writing also emphasised the lives of the respectable, hard-working plebeian class, which were used to demonstrate that appropriate moral and thrifty living would bring its own rewards as typified by Hannah More's *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*.³³ Written as 'an instructive entertainment to young persons' who do not always read books 'of a moral tendency', the anonymous novel *The Wedding Ring; or, History of Miss Sidney* describes Lucy Sidney finding a rural retreat in a small cottage. Her bedroom included 'a few delph dishes ranged on the humble chimney-piece, the little window curtain of sprigged linen, the shining brown floor, the neat patch-work quilt, the emblem of industry' and was used to illustrate 'a most exact pattern of rural economy'.³⁴

The search for a rural idyll was also the theme of a letter *On Rural Simplicity* by a female author, although ostensibly written by a gentleman to his friend. In a similar way he was guided around a country farm by the farmer's wife and the description of an ordered farmyard, well-tended garden and a cottage 'perhaps cleaner than many palaces' included the best bedchamber where he was to sleep. He was 'greatly pleased by the patch-work quilt, which covered a neat bed, the curtains of which she informed me were her own spinning: a rare proof of industry! as the little sprigged window curtain, and the exact arrangement of some delft-ware on the free-stone chimney piece gave an air of neatness to the whole room.'³⁵ When the Marquis of Clarendon was taken ill in *Montrose, or the Gothic Ruin*, he was invited to seek refuge in a Welsh cottage by a 'neat-looking old woman, the picture of health and cleanliness'. She instructed her daughter to prepare a bed room by airing sheets, hanging curtains and covering the bed with a patchwork quilt.³⁶

An exponent of this literary style, Sarah Trimmer used the symbol of a patchwork quilt to emphasise her belief that the lower classes should know their position in society and behave appropriately as set out in her treatise on managing the poor, *The Oeconomy of*

³³ H. More, *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, (London, 1795)

³⁴ Anon., *The Wedding Ring; or, History of Miss Sidney*, Vol. 1, preface vii, (London, 1779), p.165

³⁵ Anon., *Literary Amusements; or Evening Entertainment by a Female Hand*, 2nd edition, (Dublin, 1782), p.195

³⁶ Anon., *Montrose, or the Gothic Ruin, a Novel*, (London, 1799), p.15

Charity.³⁷ In her novel *The Two Farmers*, Squire Harvey and his wife admired the Simpkins family for not having ideas above their station. When visiting their farm they find it clean and tidy and were ‘charmed with the delightful view they had had of rural simplicity’. The neat parlour had a cane couch ‘with cushions of patch-work, made of bits Mrs Simpkins has sewed together and joined whilst she was a servant’ and the best bed chamber contained a bed with green harrateen curtains and ‘a very pretty patchwork quilt’, which had been Mrs Simpkins’s mother’s.³⁸

Trimmer marked the difference between ornamental patchwork made by ladies with leisure time and the simple patchwork which was used as gifts for the poor and to clothe girls in charity schools:

I would by no means condemn the taste, which has led Ladies of latter years to the composition of patch-work for various ornamental uses; great leisure justifies the practice. Performances of this kind I have viewed with admiration; and it always gives me pleasure to see the *needle* made subservient to the purpose of amusement; for those hands cannot be employed in dealing and shuffling cards, which have by patient perseverance in joining inch to inch, produced the bed cover or the window curtain.

She promoted ‘a new species of patchwork’ which could be stitched quickly without much thought to the pattern and could be put to practical use ‘Many a leisure time has been, and is still, pleasantly employed in adding to the piece, in which the display of fancy and ingenuity, gives place to the saving of time’.³⁹ She cites the example of a charity school where the girls are clothed in patchwork gowns ‘made of pieces of different kinds’. The fabric scraps for the patchwork were donated by the school’s benefactors and the gowns made by a ‘manufactory for Patchwork’ where patchwork was produced by the yard for new gowns and to repair old ones by a ladies’ sewing group.⁴⁰ In another Sunday school she claimed to have seen a little girl ‘Very neatly dressed, whose gown, apron, shift, and cap were entirely made of pieces of white and coloured linen’ and her dress was made from fabric rags purchased by the pound.⁴¹

³⁷ S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or an Address to Ladies Concerning Sunday-Schools; the Establishment of Schools of Industry under Female Inspection; And the Distribution of Voluntary Benefactions*, (Dublin, 1787), pp.3-26

³⁸ S. Trimmer, *The Two Farmers, an Exemplary Tale: Designed to Recommend the Practice of Benevolence towards Mankind and All Other Living Creatures*, (London, 1787), pp.63, 65-6,

³⁹ S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or, an Address to Ladies; Adapted to the Present State of Charitable Institutions in England*, Vol. 1, (London, 1801), p.239

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.238

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.115

Her monthly publication *The Family Magazine* provided entertainment through morality tales. In one tale, a visiting lady helped lift the spirits of the jealous wife of a hard-working labourer by encouraging her to fill her time by sewing patchwork. The lady was fond of stitching patchwork herself, but had been distracted by doing good works for the poor in the neighbourhood. She gave the fabric pieces, which she had been collecting ‘with the design of joining them for a counterpane’ to the wife and kept giving fresh supplies of pieces so that ‘the patch-work went on, till it adorned the chamber in the form of a bed [curtains], a quilt, and chair-covers’ and ‘Jealousy was banned from the house’.⁴²

The morality tale was a popular instrument for the instruction of the young and patchwork was used to emphasise the benefits of moral, obedient and thrifty behaviour. In *Virtue in a Cottage*, the respectable Bark family, who lived in straitened circumstances, got their just reward of education and employment for the children after being visited by a lady who was impressed by their clean and tidy cottage and the children’s good behaviour. She admired the patchwork dress made by one of their daughters who had stitched together seventy nine pieces of fabric scraps to make it.⁴³ The social elevation and beneficial marriage of a farm labourer’s daughter was described in *The History of Polly Patchwork*. Polly’s good character, which made her deserving of such good fortune, was demonstrated by the economical way she went about making herself a new coat. She obtained small pieces of fabric ‘too small for general use’ from dressmakers and joined the pieces together into a patchwork garment.⁴⁴ Both Betsey Bark and Polly Patchwork were laughed at by their neighbours, but the tales outlined that their characters proved strong enough to resist the teasing and the wearing of patchwork clothes was to their credit.

These later writers recognised that there was a difference between the fashionable patchwork projects requiring good sewing skills and plenty of free time to execute, which were stitched by middling and genteel ladies and the quickly-made pieces of patchwork, which were made by women in more straitened circumstances. This difference is an important consideration when examining the use of patchwork in the figurative language of the period.

⁴² S. Trimmer, *The Family Magazine; or, a Repository of Religious Instruction, and Rational Amusement*, (April, 1788), Morality Tale VIII, pp.242-4

⁴³ Anon., *Virtue in a Cottage: or, a Mirror for Children in Humble Life*, (London, 1790), p.60; also plagiarised with only the names changed as: Anon., *Virtue in a Village: or, a Looking Glass for Children in Humble Life*, (London, 1795)

⁴⁴ Anon., *The History of Polly Patchwork*, (London, 1816)

The Figurative use of Patchwork

In 1697, John Polloxfen employed the term *patchwork* to criticise the government's attempts to regulate imports and exports through the introduction of a variety of Acts saying 'for it cannot be expected they [the Acts] should have any effect for common Good, at best, but Patch-work.'⁴⁵ In the same year that Baker portrayed Mr Maiden helping ladies with their patchwork in *Tunbridge Walks*, an anonymous author used *patchwork* in a negative way when his character, Mrs Trap, described an attempted conversation making 'as unnatural a peice [sic] of patchwork as velvet and Brocade upon a Hop-Sack'.⁴⁶

After Baker announced that patchwork was fashionable in *Hampstead Heath*, Jane Barker in *A Patchwork Screen for the Ladies* recommended it to her female readers saying 'I think I ought to say something in Favour of Patch-Work, the better to recommend it to my female readers, as well in their Discourse, as their Needle-Work'. She accepted that patchwork was widely practiced, sufficient for her to use it in a figurative way to describe how she set out the episodes in the life of her heroine, Galesia and to explain a group of ladies as having:

Sentiments as differently mix'd as the Patches in their Work: To wit, Whigs and Tories, High-Church and Low-Church, Jacobites and Williamites, and many more Distinctions, which they divide and sub-divide,... till at last they make this Disunion meet in a harmonious Tea-Table Entertainment.⁴⁷

These authors demonstrated that Dr Johnson's and the other lexicographers' definitions of *patchwork* were understood and utilised beyond the world of women's needlework. From the early eighteenth century, the term developed to be used in a variety of ways as a simile to describe other objects that had the same feature of being made up of a number of components or as a metaphor to convey an idea or expression. For similes and metaphors to work effectively, the eighteenth century audience needed to be familiar with the term in its original literal form and appreciate its figurative use to emphasise meaning in wider general discourse. Despite the philosophical antipathy to non-literal writing, figurative language was a key technique that writers, critics and orators of the period employed widely

⁴⁵ J. Polloxfen, J., *A Discourse of Trade and Coyn*, Preface, (London, 1697), A4

⁴⁶ Anon., *English Lucian; or, Modern Dialogues between A Vintner and his Wife. A Reformer of Manners and his Wife, and a Captain of the Guards. A master of Arts and a Lady's Woman*. (London, 1703)

⁴⁷ J. Barker, J., *A Patchwork Screen for the Ladies; or, Love and Virtue*, Introduction, (London, 1723), iv-viii

in order to convey their ideas and opinions and patchwork was one of a limited number of textile terms including embroidery and spinning, which were utilised within this style.

Patchwork was used in complimentary way to describe a pleasing potpourri of elements as seen with Barker's explanation of a group of ladies who possessed a number of opposing sentiments or in an 1818 poem to mankind:

Surely Patch-work exactly resembles mankind, A motley assemblage of opposites joined. The grace and the gay there together are mix'd. The good and the bad by each other affx'd; The strong and the weak - the old-fashioned and new, The ugly and those that are beautiful too...⁴⁸

Buildings with architectural features acquired over a number of centuries formed 'the patchwork of different periods' or had 'a patchwork appearance to the outside'.⁴⁹

In the literary world, correspondence containing a blend of chit-chat, daily activities and family news were given this positive description. In *The History of Sir William Harrington* Miss Julia Harrington wrote to Cordelia Harrington 'Now therefore for another sort of a patchwork letter, since at many different intervals it must be written'.⁵⁰ The direct comparison with patchwork practice continues in Lord Castledown's correspondence with Sir James Seaton in *The Count de Poland*, 'Expect that, my letters will resemble the patch-work in your grandmother's dressing room'.⁵¹ Miss Morely tells Miss Aubrey in *The Liberal American*, 'Tomorrow I will send this patchwork epistle, and must therefore conclude it now as I seldom write on a morning'.⁵² Unusually a drama critic lauded the new production of *The Tempest with Don Juan* staged at the King's Theatre, Haymarket saying 'There are few Plays, we are to add, sustained with more uniform excellence than is this pleasant patchwork'.⁵³ A selection of prose and verse written on a variety of subjects was published by the author as *Small Literary Patchwork*.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ *Norfolk Chronicle*, Saturday 21 November 1818, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁴⁹ R. Thoroton, *The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire, Extracted Out of Records, Original Evidences*, Vol. 1, (London, 1790), p.93; H. Peckham, *The Tour of Holland, Dutch Brabant, The Austrian Netherlands, and Part of France; In Which is Included a Description of Paris*, (London, 1780), p.197

⁵⁰ Mr. Richardson, *The History of Sir William Harrington. Written Some Years Since, and Revised and Corrected*, Vol. III, LII, (London, 1772), p.1

⁵¹ M. Minifie, *The Count de Poland*, London, Vol. 4, p.201, (Dublin, 1780),

⁵² Anon., *The Liberal American. A Novel, in a Series of Letters*, Vol. 1, (London, 1785), p.196

⁵³ *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser*, Wednesday 28 December 1791, The Times Digital Archive, accessed: 10 May 2012

⁵⁴ *Oxford Journal*, 1 June 1805, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 10 May 2012

Examples of the positive metaphorical use of the term *patchwork* occur throughout the century and demonstrate a connection with decorative patchwork, which was an acceptable pastime for ladies of higher social status. This style of comparison of *patchwork* with other objects or ideas was associated with the biblical references to Joseph's coat of many colours, encouraging an attitude of respect and demonstrating the moral acceptability of the practice. Barker said that patchwork was uncommon before her time and had not been mentioned since 'the Patriarch Joseph whose Garment was of sundry Colours'.⁵⁵ Trimmer described the patchwork gowns that the girls at one charity school had been given saying 'for some time past, the girls have been clothed like the good old Patriarch's darling son, *in garments of many colours*, which are highly valued by the wearers as tokens of good will, and worn without envy, because they are not the badges of partial distinction'.⁵⁶ Such associations with a biblical figure would validate patchwork as respectable needlework allowing it to be politically acceptable for Queen Charlotte to be associated with the craft and for patchwork to be chosen as a suitable topic for an evangelical poet.

However there was, more frequently, a darker side to the use of *patchwork* in the figurative language of the day. Throughout the century, literary critics, journalists and politicians used patchwork as a critical metaphor to denounce bad characters, ill-thought arguments, unfounded theories, badly drafted laws, cobbled literary or dramatic compositions; indeed any idea that was deemed to be an unattractive, makeshift or incoherent jumble of elements. As a compliment, a reviewer praised a drama because it was not 'a piece of patchwork, composed of exaggerated sentences, and sentiments inartificially tacked together'.⁵⁷

This style was exemplified by the report in the *Northampton Mercury* of a Mary Bond's brother-in-law who, through the medium of her gravestone, used the term in a negative way to blacken her character. The lengthy inscription included:

She was an affectionate Wife and a tender Mother; BUT Her husband and Child, whom she loved, seldom saw her Countenance without a disgusting Frown. Abroad her Conduct was influenced by good Breeding; BUT At home – by ill Temper; The Talents in which she principally excelled, Were, Difference in Opinion, and

⁵⁵ Barker, *A Patchwork Screen*, Introduction, (1723), v

⁵⁶ Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity*, (1801), p.238

⁵⁷ J. Perry, *The European Magazine, and London Review, Containing the Literature, History, Politics, Arts, Manners and Amusements of the Age*, Vol. 60, (London, 1811), p.198

discovering Flaws and Imperfections...Finding she had lost the Affections of her Husband, As well as the Regard of her Neighbours, She died of vexation, July 20, 1768.

Whether this was a spoof or not, the effective use of *patchwork* was demonstrated when the report ended saying that the stone was erected ‘As a weekly monitor to the surviving Wives of the Parish, That they may avoid the Infamy of having their Memories handed down to Posterity With a Patch-work Character.’⁵⁸

A three-volume publication of proceedings in the Houses of Lords and Commons was condemned as being ‘made up of Patchwork and indigested Fragments’.⁵⁹ Debates in Parliament provided opportunities for speakers to accuse their opponents of operating ‘a system of patchwork and expediency’ or producing policies that were a patchwork of ideas and dissemblers were also described as ‘patchwork’, while Government continued to be criticised for making up ‘a patch-work sort of Cabinet, composed of men of all parties and opinions jumbled together’ and signing ‘Patchwork Treaties’.⁶⁰ In a direct connection to the needlework, Pitt was criticised for formulating Bills that ‘are so many proofs of the want of systematic arrangements, that it appears more like his grandmother’s patchwork carpet, than a plan for the government of a vast empire.’⁶¹

The style of writing at the period allowed the use of the term as a negative metaphor at the same time that it was used positively in allusions to the same theme. Eight years after Barker’s *A Patchwork Screen*, a less attractive version of mankind was conjured in a writer’s depiction of a London gaming house:

where there was such a Scene of human Patchwork, as I thank my stars, I never beheld; Lawyers, Clarks, and Mercers Foremen, were the Beaux; some flaunting Ladies of the Town, the Belles; the rest consisted of a Set of shabby genteel Sharpers, ordinary Tradesmen, and raw Prentices, who here and there were accompanied by the Servant Maids of their respective houses.⁶²

⁵⁸ *Northampton Mercury*, 9 February 1778, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁵⁹ *Newcastle Courant*, 28 March 1741, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁶⁰ *Ipswich Journal*, 28 March 1778; *Newcastle Courant*, 28 March 1741; *The Times*, Saturday 20 June 1812, Issue 8632, p.2; *Old Common Sense or The Englishman’s Journal*, Issue 82, Saturday 26 August 1738, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

⁶¹ Anon., *Observations on the Political Life of Mr. Pitt.*, (London, 1788), p.10

⁶² Anon., *A View of the Town or, Memoirs of London*, (London, 1731), p.37

The production of *The Tempest with Don Juan* was applauded as ‘pleasant patchwork’, but frequently critics were quick to accuse musicians of plagiarising the works of others such as Hayden and Beethoven to produce ‘patchwork’ compositions and unpopular plays were reviewed as a jumble or patchwork of previous works. Holcroft’s comedy *Hear Both Sides* was ‘a miserable patchwork of moping melancholy’.⁶³ Literary reviewers condemned writing that did not appeal to them by using such a label as in an Oxford publication describing the contents of other monthly pamphlets as ‘patchwork, pye-ball’d, party-colour’d’ or in a piece ascribed to Dean Swift ‘a manifest incoherent Piece of Patchwork’.⁶⁴ Opponents of any published theory resorted to the term in order to justify their argument. The treatise asserting the rights of the Christian Church published in 1709 was quickly criticised as ‘Patchwork Divinity’ in the same year.⁶⁵

The utilisation of a textile term to provide critical comment on people, political organisations, ideas and artistic creations was a notable feature of the century. The broader topics of embroidery and spinning were frequently used in this way to suggest dissembling or a web of deceit, but patchwork was a more specialised single needlework technique and was not such a general term. The negative use of *patchwork* can be traced to two separate tropes; the first relating to comparisons with the chequered costume of the Merry Andrew or Harlequin clown and the second drawing on the mending or repair motif running through the definitions of patch.

In *O’Brien’s Lusorium*, O’Brien used textile imagery to depict the dramatic styles of the theatre with ‘the embroidered silk and satin of tragedy, the plain broad-cloth of comedy, and the patch-work garb of pantomime’ and this association of patchwork with the costume of pantomime characters enabled satirical comment on a variety of topics.⁶⁶ With the growing popularity of the Italian Commedia dell’arte theatre, the British clown character Merry Andrew was joined by Harlequin or Arlecchino. They were both distinguished by their multi-coloured costumes, often called *motley*, which Johnson defined as ‘coloured, spotted or variegated like a garden moth’. In 1710 it was written that ‘A Coat of Patchwork may make a

⁶³ *The Times*, Tuesday 1 February 1803, Issue 5632, p.2, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 10 May 2012

⁶⁴ Anon., *The Student or The Oxford and Cambridge Monthly Miscellany*, Vol. II, (Oxford, 1750), p.2; Anon, *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately Enter’d into Holy Orders*, (London, 1721), p.24

⁶⁵ C. Place, *Adversaria: or, Truths Opposed to Some of the Falsehoods Contain’d in a Book, Call’d, The Rights of the Christian Church Asserted, &c.*, (London, 1709), p.115

⁶⁶ W. O’Brien, *O’Brien’s Lusorium: Being a Collection of Convivial Songs, Lectures, &c.*, (London, 1782), p.53

Merry Andrew' and patchwork was noted as a key feature of the dress style whenever a writer wished to make fun of or criticise an object or person.⁶⁷

The character of Squire Toper from Cumberland who comes up to London to attend Parliament and tries to adapt his country ways for city life was described by 'a gentleman of Oxford' in 1764. The readers were asked to reflect on how this 'man of taste began...Himself he deems a wight of high renown, while the world counts him but a motley clown. Such patch-work manners must all palates loath, Half beau, half rustic, and despised by both'.⁶⁸

A satirical description of a monk in *The Weekly Entertainer* was enhanced by the frequent use of patchwork when describing his garments in order to emphasise his ludicrous appearance.⁶⁹ A disappointed suitor sought advice in a letter to *The Times*, when he was taken aback by the apparent fashionable garb of his possible future brother-in-law. He said his dress 'was like Harlequin- all patch-work – not two things alike' and enquired whether he should also become a fop before marriage.⁷⁰

Upton' s commentary on Shakespeare described how later authors have adapted and plagiarised his plays 'so that the ancient robe of our tragedian, by this miserable darning and threadbare patchwork, resembles the long motley coat of the Fool, in our old plays, introduced to raise the laughter of the spectators'.⁷¹ The production of *Fairy-Hill; or May-Day* at a theatre in London in 1785 reminded the critic 'of those motley pieces of patchwork exhibited in the windows of a woollen draper's shop, with only this difference, that there is some judgement displayed in the arrangement of their party-coloured materials; whereas not even the faintest glimmer of it can be discovered throughout this performance'.⁷²

In the second half of the century, some authors made the connection between the respected biblical character of Joseph and the buffoonery of the pantomime in an unlikely combination of the positive and negative aspects of patchwork. Illustrations of this

⁶⁷ Anon., *A Dialogue between Timothy and Philatheus: in which the Principles and Projects of a Late Whimsical Book, in titl'd, The Rights of the Christian Church are Fairly Stated and Answer'd in their Kinds, &c.*, Vol. II, (London, 1710), preface

⁶⁸ D. Fenning, *The Annual Register, or a View of the History, Politicks, and Literature, for the Year 1768*, (London, 1768), p.235

⁶⁹ *The Weekly Entertainer; or, Agreeable and Instructive Repository containing a Collection of Select Things*, Vol. III, (Sherborne, Dorset, 1784), p.529

⁷⁰ *The Times*, Saturday 3 October 1789, Issue 1275, p.3, *The Times Digital Archive*, accessed: 20 September 2012

⁷¹ J. Upton, *Critical Observations on Shakespeare*, Book I, (London, 1746), p.16

⁷² *The European Magazine and London Review: Containing the Literature, History, Politics, Arts, Manners & Amusements of the Age*, Vol. VII, (London, 1785), p.40

contradictory use include the reviews of dramatic productions ‘The scenes are patchwork, like a Joseph’s coat. The whole, a motley linsey wolsey piece’ and ‘The coat of Joseph, and the dress of Harlequin, were never composed of patchwork more general than in the style of this performance’.⁷³

Throughout the century, the terms *botch*, *bungle*, *cobble* and *spoil* were used for ill-prepared, shoddily-made, badly-repaired or poorly-managed objects, events, theories or ideas. They were frequently associated with the noun and verb *patch* and both Dyche and Johnson included another definition of the verb in their dictionaries to confirm this association. Dyche wrote that *to patch* was ‘to do a Thing ordinarily, to daub or smear a Thing over in a clumsy Manner’ and Johnson ‘To mend clumsily; to mend so as that the original strength or beauty is lost’.⁷⁴ This moved *patch* away from the idea of meticulous repair carried out by the respectable plebeian class as illustrated in *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* toward the more disreputable world of the unreliable and troublesome poor. As outlined in Chapter 3, patchwork made by many plebeian women was likely to have been stitched in conditions of social deprivation and financial hardship. Such basic work containing a ‘patched-up’, random jumble of fabric pieces would still conform to Johnson’s definition of patchwork, but could be associated with poor workmanship and condemned by some as un-attractive symbols of poverty and making do.

A piece emphasising this connection with poverty and making do, said to have been written by Swift, concerns a man in Marshalsea prison who possessed a contented mind and feared no envy from any of his fellow prisoners. Swift cites patchwork as a fashionable pastime in other writing, but here marks a different kind ‘If the Rags of a Whole Alley are united to make him a waistcoat he is not uneasy under his load of Patchwork, when he sees the great decay that mine is labouring under.’⁷⁵

Wieland’s *Dialogues from the German* included an imagined conversation between Socrates and Timoclea on apparent and real beauty in which he claimed that man’s endeavours should be focussed entirely on virtue since ‘Single pieces of virtue, sewed into a

⁷³A. Murphy, *The Examiner, A Satire*, (London, 1761), p.28; Anon., *A New Theatrical Dictionary. Containing an Account of All the Dramatic Pieces*, (London, 1792), p.20

⁷⁴Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, (1737); Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language*, Vol. 2, (1755)

⁷⁵*Weekly Journal or British Gazatteer*, Saturday 11 March 1721, The British Newspaper Archive, accessed: 9 May 2012

vicious or foolish life, are like tawdry patchwork in a beggar's garment.'⁷⁶In Bruce's *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery* he wrote that, since Popery was never abolished by Act of Parliament in the seventeenth century, contemporary Christianity had been adulterated. He thought it was easy to show that current reforms carried out by the Church of England were 'at best but a bungled piece of patch-work, a piece of new cloth upon an old garment'.⁷⁷

One of the articles published in the *Town and Country Magazine* compared politicians to cobblers since 'One cobbler attempts to botch the decayed soles of your weather-beaten shoes, the other attempts to repair your more injured political constitution; the one bungles without art; the other patches without skill.'. Listing a series of political mismanagement the writer continues:

If he encourages the Russians to block up the ports of the Turks, and thereby prevent their commerce being carried on, does this not give the coup de grace to our Levant trade, already in its last gasp; is not this worse than cobbling [sic]? The money bills in Ireland prove to be so many bulls, (without any claim to infallibility) and after being re-cobbed here, the Irish will not own them with their bungling patchwork. And to complete the cobbling, tea is sent to America to make soup for the fish, and excite insurrections.⁷⁸

Later, those complaining about the new statue of the Duke of Wellington accused the designers of cobbling together a cast of Alexander the Great taming Bucephalus with the head of the Duke to create 'a barbarous patchwork'.⁷⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the frequent use of *patchwork* in the language of the long eighteenth century. The literal understanding of the term appeared to be a constant throughout the period from the beginning of the eighteenth century despite an apparent mobility in the meaning of the component words of *patch* and *piece* that were connected to the needlework. However the use of *patchwork* at the end of the seventeenth century is a little uncertain and

⁷⁶ C. M. Wieland, *Dialogues from the German of M. Wieland*, (London, 1775), p.265

⁷⁷ A. Bruce, *Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery, Deduced from a Review of its Principles and History, with Respect to Liberty and the Interest of Princes and Nations*, (Edinburgh, 1781), p.321

⁷⁸ *The Town and Country Magazine; or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction and Entertainment*, Vol. VI, (London, 1774), p.24

⁷⁹ *The Times*, Saturday 27 July 1816, issue 9898, p3, The Times Digital Archive, accessed: 20 September 2012

early references may, in part, relate to one of two other forms of decorative needlework, which were paning and appliqué.

The literature of the time revealed that, in the early part of the eighteenth century, patchwork was used to describe a fashionable pastime, which could be admired for its beauty and workmanship and viewed as a testament to the hours that gentry and upper middling women spent at home with their needles. Later in the century, the term developed into an emblem of domestic thrift and efficiency and as such was employed to promote the idealised behaviour of the respectable members of the plebeian class. Writers, including Trimmer, used the patchwork quilt to symbolise the moral and appropriate life of the poor that brought its own reward and viewed simple patchwork as more fitting and economical work to occupy women's time than ornamental patchwork.

Patchwork was embedded in the figurative language of the day in a way that other decorative needlework and craft techniques such as crewel work, tent (stitch) and filigree work were not. The popularity of these three techniques varied over the period and none of the terms appear with any kind of consistency in the dictionaries of the time; *tent stitch* was not defined, *filigree* occurs only in Dyche's improved versions of his dictionary in 1794 and Dyche provided the sole description for *crewel* as 'a fine Sort of Worsted commonly made from Thrums or Ends of the Stuff of Weaver's Canes, used to mark or do curious Needle-Works with'.⁸⁰ These techniques were practiced by women in better social circumstances to produce decorative furnishings or fashionable ornaments and as such did not have the universal recognition that patchwork may have done. The effective use of *patchwork* both as a simile and metaphor in all forms of discourse demonstrates its ubiquity and emphasises the widespread understanding of the term at the time.

The figurative style of the period allowed the simultaneous use of a word in differing ways so that *patchwork* was used both positively and negatively. The employment of the term in a complimentary manner can be connected to the fashionable status of the work for most of the period and its association with the biblical character Joseph and his coat of many colours. This allowed the development of the term to be used positively to embody the desirable themes of feminine economy and practicality.

⁸⁰ Dyche mentions crewel in Dyche, *A New General English Dictionary*, 2nd edition (1737). He defines filigree as 'a kind of enriched work on gold or silver, in the manner of little threads or grains; the term is also applied to ornamental works, formed of strips of paper differently coloured, rolled into various figures, and artfully combined.' Dyche, *A New General Dictionary*, 17th edition, (1794).

The negative interpretation of the metaphor relates to two separate tropes. Patchwork was compared with the motley costumes of the buffoonish British Merry Andrew and the Harlequin clown from Commedia dell'arte theatre, allowing it to be applied effectively in satire and criticism. The word *patch* was associated with the definitions of *bungle*, *botch*, *cobble* and *spoil* in the lexicography of the day and the interpretation of poorly-made or repaired objects was expanded into *patchwork* so that it was utilised in a critical manner in literature, drama, critical review, political debate and theoretical discourse.

Conclusion

During the eighteenth century there was a significant growth in patchwork materially and linguistically. It was the century when patchwork was stitched at all levels of society and marked the time when patchwork moved out from the small domestic world of decorative sewing into the wider public sphere, leaving behind other needlework as it became embedded in the language and writing of the period.

Patchwork was widespread throughout the century allowing an appreciation of the nuances of its meaning, which facilitated its appearance in the literal and figurative language of the day. Heralded as a fashionable activity by an early eighteenth-century dramatist, it later came to symbolise domestic skill, efficiency and economy, but the term was also employed to abuse politicians in Parliament and criticise playwrights, artists and composers. It was used positively to reflect the admirable aspects of a needlework that was made with taste and skill, but as a negative metaphor to reflect an association with poor and slipshod workmanship as well as the comedic aspects of pantomime theatre.

Many needlework techniques and decorative craft activities had their comparatively brief period of popularity from the raised embroidery or stump work of the seventeenth century through to japanning, crewel work, shell work, filigree and netting, but patchwork is notable for its longevity and ubiquity. Patchwork was used as a theme for a novel in the third decade of the eighteenth century and stitched by another British author in the second decade of the nineteenth century. It was stolen from labourers, seamstresses, publicans and lodging keepers, owned by wealthier families and made by more than two hundred anonymous middling and gentry needlewomen, whose work survives into the twenty first century. Patchwork was considered a suitable pursuit for a Hanoverian Queen and appropriate furnishing for the house of an influential man of letters, but was also introduced to girls at charity schools and taught to female convicts in Newgate prison.

This thesis has argued that the history of patchwork in the long eighteenth century follows two separate narrative strands. It was regarded differently by lower and upper social classes. The definitions of patchwork by Dr. Johnson and other lexicographers of the period suggest that the distinguishing feature of the technique was the use of a variety of different

coloured pieces of cloth stitched together to make a larger whole.¹ This interpretation could be applied to a cobbled work made out of necessity, as much as a well-designed, time-consuming needlework project.

The patchwork stitched by plebeian women would have been made in conditions of social deprivation and financial hardship. Limits on time as well as sewing materials would inevitably have meant that their work would have been basic with little thought given to design while still conforming to the definitions of patchwork. In textile-producing, rural areas women acquired hand-spinning skills at the expense of learning to sew in order to maintain the supply of threads for the wool and linen industries and it is questioned whether all women from lower down the social scale possessed the skills to stitch patchwork. However, the demands from the urban middling and gentry classes for shops to meet their clothing and furnishing needs and for household servants to keep their establishments running efficiently meant that a growing number of girls were taught plain sewing in workhouses, asylums and charity schools and were capable of taking on this needlework.

The eighteenth century has been identified as the period when improved living conditions together with increases in production and consumption allowed more of the population opportunities to decorate their homes and negotiate time for leisure pursuits.² This thesis has shown that patchwork practice was consistent with much of the current historical thinking about consumption during the century. The technique was adopted by middling and gentry women as a suitable project to fill leisure hours at home and to furnish their living spaces. Patchwork made by women in comfortable circumstances could be admired for its beauty, design and workmanship demonstrating the perceived ideals of women as skilled, efficient homemakers. Yet, such women were led by the tastes of their social group and observed the changing fashions for leisure activities over the period. The remarkable, century-long survival of patchwork as fashionable needlework can only be ascribed to a serendipitous combination of circumstances.

The growth in consumption was marked by increased desire for comfort in both the public and private spaces in houses and saw a developing taste for bedroom furnishings in

¹ S. Johnson, , *A Dictionary of the English Language in which the Words are deduced from their Originals*, London, Vol. II, (London, 1755), p.291

² N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-century England*, (London: Europa Publ., 1982); L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988); M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean and A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households 1600-1750*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2004)

which patchwork was ideally suited to play a part.³ The majority of surviving patchwork objects were created for use in the bedroom, many as bedcovers; although this does not necessarily mean that most patchwork was made for this purpose.

A survey of the records of trials heard at the Old Bailey court in London and probate inventories from the Archdeaconry of Huntingdon showed that a variety of terms were used to describe bedcovers including rug, quilt, coverlet and counterpane and revealed the troublesome nature of bedcover nomenclature with an apparent mobility of the meaning of some of the terms over the period. However the data from Huntingdonshire probate records suggest that bedcover use grew over the century. By the early nineteenth century, almost all the beds found in the probate inventories used in the study were listed in association with a bedcover in addition to blankets. Significantly the small numbers of patchwork bedcovers recorded in the Old Bailey trial records are described at different time as quilts, counterpanes and coverlets with no definitive indication as to how an eighteenth-century maker or owner of patchwork bedcovers described the objects.

The study of bedcovers in the two British sources provides data against which texts on the use of beds and bedcovers in the eastern seaboard states of the USA, including Cummings, Baumgarten, Seaman Allen and Jarrett Morris can be compared.⁴

Women below the elite lived in a plain world at the beginning of the period of study. Despite the growing impact of Asian patterned textiles, in particular, Indian printed and painted cottons, most women used embroidery and quilting together with textural techniques such as pinking, slashing, tucking and gathering to provide pattern in furnishing and dress. Patchwork, using plain silks, became part of this pattern-making genre of decorative domestic needlework in the first half of the period of study. Its construction was made easier by the gradual move toward lighter woollen and silk cloths from the middle of the seventeenth century, allowing the development of mosaic and seamed patchwork techniques and moving

³ J. E. Crowley, *The Invention of Comfort: Sensibilities and Design in Early Modern Britain and Early America*, (Baltimore and England: John Hopkins University Press, 2000)

⁴ A. L. Cummings, *Bed Hangings A Treatise on Fabrics and Styles in the Curtaining of Beds 1650-1850*, (Boston: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1961); A. L. Cummings, *Rural Household Inventories: Establishing the Names, Uses and Furnishings in Colonial New England Homes 1675-1775*, (Boston: The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, 1964); L. Baumgarten, 'The Textile Trade in Boston 1650-1700', I. Quimby ed., *Arts of the Anglo-American Community in the Seventeenth Century*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1975), pp. 219-73; G. S. Allen, 'Bed Coverings, Kent County, Maryland 1710-1820', *Uncoverings, Vol. 6*, (1985), p.9-31; M. M. Jarrett Morris, "'A Bed and Curtains and All Things Thereto Belonging": Context, Value and Scarcity in Eighteenth-century Massachusetts', *Textiles in New England II: Four Centuries of Material Life, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings*, (1999), pp.43-57

patchwork away from the European inlaid patchwork style.⁵ In particular, the mosaic patchwork technique evolved as an accurate, if time consuming, method that could be used to produce geometric and figurative designs. It was favoured by women who had leisure time to stitch decorative needlework and had easy access to paper to be used as patchwork templates.

This thesis argues that the taste for printed cloth, which grew through the century despite early restrictions placed on the importation of cottons and tax regulations imposed on British print works, re-awakened an interest in complex patchwork as women collected patterned fabrics and developed ways to use them in their work.⁶ Within two generations, needlewomen learnt to exploit the pattern, tone, shade and scale of the variety of print designs on cotton and linen that became widely available through shops, second-hand markets, sales and itinerant hawkers.⁷ This interest in manipulating pattern on cloth coincided with the later eighteenth-century passion for collecting, and the fashion for ornamentation and decoration including shell work, decoupage, feather work, paper mosaics and dressing or ‘adorning’ prints, which were carried out by women such as Mrs Lybbe Powys, Mary Delany and Anna Margareta Larpent.⁸

While the majority of earlier patchwork design was based on the square and the half-square isosceles triangle, a marked change was observed in the last decade of the century. Other geometric shapes were introduced, notably the hexagon, often combined in complex larger star or compass patterns. It is argued that the appearance of complicated patchwork

⁵ For an account of inlaid patchwork see D. Neuland-Kitzerow, S. Joram and E. Karasek, ed., *Inlaid Patchwork in Europe from 1500 to the Present*, (Berlin: Museum Europäischer Kulturen Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2009)

⁶ B. Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); G. Riello, *Cotton: The Fabric that Made the Modern World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

⁷ H-C. Mui and L. Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London: Routledge, 1989); A. Buck, ‘Buying Clothes in Bedfordshire: Customers and Tradesmen, 1700-1800’, *Textile History*, 22 (1991) pp.211-37; A. Vickery, ‘Women and the World of Goods: A Lancashire Consumer and her Possessions, 1751-81’ in J. Brewer and R. Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp.274-301; C. Walsh, ‘Shop Design and the Display of Goods in Eighteenth-century London’, *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 8 No. 3 (1995), pp.157-76; A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998); N. Cox, *The Complete Tradesman: A Study in Retailing 1550-1820*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000); H. Berry, ‘Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England’, *The Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, (2002), Sixth Series, Vol. XII, pp.375-94; C. Walsh, ‘Shops, Shopping and the Art of Decision Making in Eighteenth-century England’, J. Styles and A. Vickery, eds., *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America 1700-1830*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp.151-77

⁸ E. Climenson, *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys of Hardwick House, Oxon A.D. 1756 to 1808*, (London, 1899); R. Hayden, *Mrs Delany: Her Life and Flowers*, (London: British Museum Press, 1980); M. Laird, and A. Weisberg-Roberts, eds., *Mrs Delany and Her Circle*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); The Diaries of Anna Margretta Larpent 1790-1830 are held in the Huntington Library, California, USA, ref. HM 31201; Microfilm of the journals can be seen at the British Library M1016/1-7

patterns can be attributed, in part, to improvements in girls' education and a wider availability of geometry primers at the end of the eighteenth century. This encouraged a generation of needlewomen to experiment with patchwork shapes previously beyond their ability to draw.⁹

The popularity of patchwork made from printed cotton and linens coincided with late eighteenth-century attitudes regarding the role of women in the domestic sphere. It was held to represent the ideal of the moral and capable housewife, devoted to her sewing skills and thrifty in her practice, which was promulgated in conduct literature. Authors, such as Sarah Trimmer, used patchwork to promote the ideals of the well-ordered household and applied such symbols of practicality, thrift and efficiency to their theories on the training of the female poor. In doing so, Trimmer confirmed the view that there were two styles of patchwork, practical and decorative.¹⁰

This thesis has explored the social and cultural contexts for the making of patchwork in Britain. However, these influences spread through the British Isles and across the Atlantic to the British colonies. It is important to recognise the significance of this spread because the existing literature on patchwork is predominantly focussed on the North American experience and often ignores the British connection.

The material life of people in eighteenth-century colonial America was dominated by British social, cultural and commercial influences. Historians have noted that the growing British political and commercial control of North America was paralleled by an increasingly Anglo-centric consumer culture, so that the material record of the eastern seaboard of North America is full of objects that were carried from Britain by emigrants or traders or were made domestically in reflection of British taste.¹¹ It was inevitable that women took their preferred needlework techniques and styles with them when settling in North America and close social and cultural links were maintained with Britain during and after the War of Independence, so

⁹ Primers such as C. Hutton, C., *The Compendious Measurer; Being a Brief, yet Comprehensive Treatise on Mensuration and Practical Geometry. With an Introduction to Decimal and Duodecimal Arithmetic Adapted for the Use of Schools and Practice*, (London, 1786); J. Bonnycastle, *An Introduction to Mensuration, and Practical Geometry with Notes, Containing the Reason of Every Rule, Concisely and Clearly Demonstrated*, (London, 1782)

¹⁰ S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or an Address to Ladies concerning Sunday-Schools; the Establishment of Schools of Industry under Female Inspection; And the Distribution of Voluntary Benefactions*, (Dublin, 1787); S. Trimmer, *The Oeconomy of Charity; or, an Address to Ladies; Adapted to the Present State of Charitable Institutions in England*, (London, 1801)

¹¹ This literature is exemplified by Breen's essay on the birth of an American consumer society; T. H. Breen, 'An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America, 1690-1776', *Journal of British Studies*, 25, (1986), pp.467-99

that British fashion trends continued to be transmitted to communities in the post-colonial era.

The circumstances driving the survival of widespread patchwork practice in Britain would also have been relevant in colonial America and later, the newly-independent United States. Commodities were imported in numbers to meet the needs of the expanding communities in the colonial states and fashions were followed and tastes developed in parallel to Britain.¹² The recorded experience of eleven year-old Ann Green Winslow, who was educated in Boston in 1770, illustrates a life style that appears to be similar to a British girl of the same period; she went to school, apparently learning little, acquired sewing skills, stitched patchwork and agonised about the latest fads and fashions prevalent among her school friends.¹³

The historiography relating to American quilt history spans nearly a hundred years and is far more comprehensive than that developed in Britain. The celebration of the first centennial of the United States in 1876 prompted a re-examination of the cultural history of the country and initiated the development of a nationalistic design movement that drew on the perceived aesthetic of its colonial history. The Colonial Revival movement encouraged a revival of interest in artefacts that personified an idealised past. Wealthy collectors, alongside influential decorators, validated the status of a number of historic objects, including the patchwork quilt, as cultural icons. However, the American literature focussed almost entirely on the quilt history contained inside the nation's borders. Until recently, this has encouraged an inward-looking attitude to the development of American quilt styles without full consideration of the external influences that may have shaped them.¹⁴

¹² For a recent examination of the North American taste for Asian fabrics in the eighteenth century see A. Peck, "‘India Chints’ and ‘China Taffaty’: East India Company Textiles for the North American Market", in A. Peck, ed., *Interwoven Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2013), pp.104-119

¹³ A. M. Earle, ed., *Diary of Anna Green Winslow*, (Cambridge, Mass. USA: The Riverside Press, 1895), available at The Project Gutenberg E book <http://www.gutenberg.org> accessed: 16 March 2012

¹⁴ The literature includes: M. D. Webster, *Quilts – Their Story and How to Make Them*, (New York: Doubleday, 1915); R. Finley, *Old Patchwork Quilts and the Women Who Made Them*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1929); C. Hall and R. Kretsinger, *The Romance of the Patchwork Quilt in America*, (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers Limited, 1935); F. Peto, *Historic Quilts*, (New York: The American Historical Company, 1939); F. Peto, *American Quilts and Coverlets*, (New York: Chanticleer Press, 1949); C. L. Stafford and R. Bishop, *America's Quilts and Coverlets*, (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1972); J. Holstein, *The Pieced Quilt*, (New York: New York Graphic Society, 1973); P. Orlofsky, . and M Orlofsky, *Quilts in America*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974); *Uncoverings*, The Research Papers of The American Quilt Study Group, Vol.1 onwards (1980-present); B. Brackman, *Clues in the Calico: A Guide to Identifying and Dating Antique Quilts*, (McClean, Virginia: EPM Publishings Inc., 1989); S. Fox, *Wrapped in*

Some initial work has been carried out to explore the export of the patchwork tradition across the Atlantic. Comparison of British examples with patchwork objects that have an American provenance has shown similarities in design, geometric shapes and preferred construction techniques.¹⁵ This thesis provides the groundwork for a more thorough examination of how British patchwork practice continued to influence needlewomen in the new United States of America and on into the nineteenth century while highlighting the differences in the development of patchwork between the two countries.

Patchwork was democratic; it could be practiced at all levels of society by any British needlewoman capable of stitching a variety of fabric pieces together to make a larger whole. Expensive equipment or specialist materials were not necessary, unlike the varnish and brushes required for japanning, shells sold for shell work, or paper strips and wooden mounts needed for filigree work. The needles and thread, which were essential for the work, were available in the domestic household and fabric could be collected through recycling or purchase of new, often, cheap patchwork pieces. However its accessibility and ubiquity lead to its downfall after 1800, as genteel and middling women moved on to other crafts and printed cottons were increasingly rejected by wealthy, fashionable women in the early decades of the nineteenth century. By the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, after the period of this research, patchwork was becoming increasingly concentrated lower down the social scale. In the process it was already beginning to disappear from the literature that considered the history of domestic needlework, a disappearance which this thesis had attempted to rectify.

Glory: Figurative Quilts and Bedcovers, (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1990); R. Kiracofe, *The American Quilt: A History of Cloth and Comfort 1750-1950*, (New York: Clarkson Potter Inc., 1993)

¹⁵ This work includes: *What's American about American Quilts?*, Proceedings of a Research Forum on Regional Characteristics, March 18-19 1995, Washington D.C., USA: Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of American History; D. Kraak, 'Early American Silk Patchwork Quilts', P. Benes, ed., *Textiles in Early New England: Design, Production, and Consumption*, The Dublin Seminar for New England Folklife Annual Proceedings, (1997), pp.7-28; L. Eaton, *Quilts in a Material World: Selections from the Winterthur Collection*, (Winterthur, De, USA: The Henry Francis Du Pont Museum and Abrams, 2007); C. Ducey, 'From the United Kingdom to the United States: The Evolution of Chintz Appliqué Quilts', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 11, (2010), pp35-64; B. Long, *Elegant Geometry: American and British Mosaic Patchwork*, (Lincoln, Ne, USA: International Quilt Study Center and Museum, 2011); J. Frisch, 'British Influences on the American Block-Style Quilt', *Quilt Studies*, Issue 15, (2014), pp.34-65

Appendix 1

GLOSSARY

Appliqué

This decorative technique was often associated with embroidery embellishment in the early eighteenth century and later appears to become a common domestic technique. Fabric shapes are applied to a backing fabric to make a decorative design and stitched down using a slip stitch or buttonhole stitch.

Beds

1. **Bed settle** The bed settle, an early dual-purpose item of furniture, is described by Gilbert in his *English Vernacular Furniture* (1991) as ‘designed like a panel-backed settle having a boxed-in seat and solid ends; on the release of two hooked catches the front falls forward to create a sleeping crib’.
2. **High bed** High beds have four or two posts often with either a backboard or overhead tester They were frequently furnished with bed hangings – curtains, head cloth, valance etc.
3. **Press or Turn-up bed** This was a simple structure which was hinged against the wall during the day, often hidden behind cupboard doors or a curtain rod and curtains built onto the wall.
4. **Stump bed** These were basic low beds with either short bedposts or none at all.
5. **Truckle, Trundle or Run bed** Such beds were designed to wheel away underneath another bed for storage
6. **Truss or Field bed** The truss or field bed is a practical bed which can be taken apart for transport.

Broderie Perse appliqué (also known as Chintz Appliqué or Cut-Chintz)

Broderie perse appliqué requires the use of large-scale printed cotton or linen. Motifs from the designs, such as flowers, leaves, branches or birds, are selected and cut out before being combined together with other motifs to create a new pattern and sewn using the appliqué technique. This style of appliqué was often employed to create Tree of Life-style designs in homage to the Indian painted and printed chintzes.

Corded quilting

This method of decorative quilting was closely connected to the work imported from Marseille although it was also practised in Britain. It is a decorative technique with raised areas providing texture on the surface of the work without the warmth-giving, middle layer seen in wadded quilting. Needlewomen stitched parallel lines through two layers of fabric to create channels through which cords were passed from the back of the work.

Inlaid or Intarsia patchwork technique

To work this method, the maker used paper patterns to cut the components of the patchwork design out of thick woollen cloth before butting and then whip stitching the pieces together without the need to turn seam allowances to the back of the work. The thick wool pieces are treated in the same way as pieces of wood to be used for marquetry, which is seen in decoration on furniture in the seventeenth and eighteenth century.

Mosaic patchwork technique (also known as English paper piecing, piecing over papers or paper template piecing)

The mosaic patchwork method, although time-consuming, is very accurate and can be used to produce complex designs as well as simple repeat patterns. In the method fabric is wrapped over paper shapes (templates) with the seam allowance taken to the back and secured down with tacking (basting) stitches. Once wrapped, the patches are butted together and then oversewn (whip stitched) together along the folded edges and the work builds as more pieces are joined to the design. The paper templates control the shape of the patchwork pieces. Needlewomen prepared the papers by cutting out geometric shapes, such as triangles or hexagons, using a wooden or metal template guide or by drawing a design on paper and then cutting the paper design apart into component pieces.

Piecing Another broad term for the patchwork techniques

Plain Sewing Stitches

1. **Back stitch** The back stitch makes the strongest seam. It is worked by taking a stitch backwards on top of the work and then running the needle under the work forward far enough to create a space on top for the next back stitch.
2. **Running stitch** Running stitch is quick to sew and is worked by running the needle in and out of the fabric making a stitch on the top and then the bottom of the work.

3. **Slip Stitch** Slip stitch is used to fasten one fabric onto another and is intended not to be too obvious on the front of the work. It is worked by taking the needle in a small stitch from the top fabric down to the other fabric and returning the needle in a much longer slanted stitch underneath and back up to the top fabric.
4. **Whip stitch** The whip stitch is used to join two fabrics that are butted together by stitching along their edges and is often used to attach a fine ruffle or lace to a thicker cotton or linen. It is worked by taking the stitch from one edge across to the other and back again.

Seamed patchwork technique

The method for **seamed patchwork** is the same as that used to sew the components of a garment together. Two patchwork pieces are placed with the right side of the pieces against each other and sewn using a running stitch or, occasionally a back stitch. This patchwork can be much less accurate than mosaic patchwork relying on the maker to cut fabric pieces in accurate shapes and to join the pieces with a consistent seam allowance. The advantage of the method is that the maker would find it quicker to stitch than mosaic patchwork and it does not require a ready source of paper for templates.

Units of Currency

The British sterling currency in the eighteenth century was defined in pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d) and written as £0.0s.0d. There were 12 pence to the shilling and 20 shillings to the pound

Units of Measurement

In the eighteenth century the standard units of measurement were supplemented by a parallel measuring system often employed when measuring cloth or thread.

1. **Standard Measurement** Length was defined in yards (yds), feet (ft) and inches (ins). There were 12 inches to the foot and 3 feet or 36 inches to the yard
2. **Ell Measurement** The English ell was often employed with nails, half-quarters and quarters for measuring textiles. A nail is equivalent to $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, a half-quarter (or 2 nails) is equivalent to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, a quarter is equivalent to 9 inches and an ell is $\frac{5}{4}$ of a yard or 45 inches. It is mathematically connected to the standard measurement of yards because the quarter (9 inches) is a fraction of both the yard and the ell.

Wadded quilting

Wadded quilting is made by layering a sandwich of top fabric (or patchwork), middle filling of wool, cotton or silk and backing fabric together. The layers were joined with running or back stitches, which create a textural top surface of raised and flattened areas.

Whip Stitch patchwork technique

The whip-stitch (or over sewing) technique is worked by joining together patchwork pieces which had been prepared by finger pressing turnings (or seam allowances) to the wrong side of the cloth, before the pieces were joined by whip stitching (oversewing) them together along the fold lines. It can be inaccurate depending upon how precisely the maker cut the pieces and pre-pressed the seam allowances.

Appendix 2

Database of Patchwork Objects

Many of the 222 objects in this research were in accessible institutional or private collections allowing detailed study. However, others were located at a distance and information regarding their physical form was limited by the variable quality and quantity of available accession records. For many of the latter, the detail was often limited to the dimensions and general fabric content of the patchwork and additional information regarding sewing technique, the presence of templates and dating of the object using the fabrics present, was frequently unavailable. The current location of some items, either sold at auction or recorded in documentation projects in the past, is unknown and further examination of them was impossible. Provenance details rarely survived in any of the objects in the database.

The database was set using Microsoft Office Access 2007. The inadequacies of the available information in some cases prompted the decision to limit the recorded fields in the research database developed for this thesis (see below). Many of the fields related to physical properties that could be appraised visually across all the examples in the database. Two specific patterns were identified for particular note: the use of half-square triangles in diagonally-quartered square blocks, for convenience called ‘hourglass’ and the six-sided hexagon set around a central hexagon in a ‘rosette’.

Accessible objects provided opportunities for close examination allowing addition detail regarding sewing techniques and template use together with detailed fabric analysis.

Fields for the Patchwork Objects database

Database ID

Source

Unknown location Y/N

Reference number

Maker

Occupation

When made

Year of making

Period of making (in decades)

Period of making (in quarter century)

Provenance

Location (town)

Location (county)

Country

Patchwork type – banner, bed hangings, chair seat, chasuble, cot quilt, coverlet, curtain, cushion, doll bed quilt, fire screen, fragment, fragment sewing case, maniple, pocket, quilt, sewing case, valance

Size length (in cms)

Size width (in cms)

Sewing technique – appliqué, inlaid, mosaic, seamed, whipstitch

Main fabric – cotton, linen, cotton/linen, silk, wool

Second fabric

Paper templates Y/N

Fabric templates Y/N

Main shape – clamshell, diamond, figurative, hexagon, long hexagon, long strip, octagon, pentagon, rectangle, square, triangle, other

Other shape

Layout –all-over, all-over/border, block, centre/all-over,, centre/block, centre/border, frame, other

‘Hourglass’ pattern Y/N

Hexagon rosettes

Design source

Connected object

Notes

Notes Image (hyperlink)

Appendix 3

Sources for the Recorded Patchwork Objects

The sources to be used provided information on three categories of object :

1. Known items in public or private ownership that could be accessed for detailed examination
2. Items in institutions, which were inaccessible through distance or closure, where records would be limited or further enquiry difficult.
3. Items whose existence is known through records of documentation or listing in auction catalogues, but the current whereabouts is unknown

A complete or partial record of physical features could be obtained from the items in the first category, but the information from the second two categories would be lacking detail. Objects numbered 156, 162, 177, 178, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 195, 198, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 219, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239 (**in bold**) have American provenance and are not included in the survey statistics

Database no.	Reference no.	Type	Owner
1	1982-1	quilt	Private owner PO1
2	1998-2	coverlet	Private owner PO1
3	2000-2	quilt	Private owner PO1
4	2002-2	coverlet	Private owner PO1
5	2004-1	coverlet	Private owner PO1
6	2006-2	coverlet	Private owner PO1
7	2006-1	coverlet	Private owner PO1
8	no. 16	coverlet	Castle Doorn (Schloss Berlin coll.) Netherlands
9		chasuble	Wardour Castle, Wiltshire
10		maniple	Wardour Castle, Wiltshire
11		coverlet	Private owner PO5
12		coverlet	Private owner PO4
13		coverlet	Private owner PO6
14	rbo 3	quilt	Private owner PO2
15	rbo 4	coverlet	Private owner PO2

16	rbo 5	fragment	Private owner PO2
17	rbo 6	quilt	Private owner PO2
18	rbo 9	quilt	Private owner PO2
19	rbo 14	quilt	Private owner PO2
20	rbo 15	coverlet	Private owner PO2
21	rbo 17	coverlet	Private owner PO2
22	rbo 18	coverlet	Private owner PO2
23	rbo 10	fragment	Private owner PO2
24	rbo	coverlet	Private owner PO2
25	cat. 14	coverlet	Tullie House museum, Cumbria
26	tex3468 28	quilt	Christie's
27	tex3676 81	coverlet	Christie's
28	tex3807 127	fragment	Christie's
29	tex3807 128	coverlet	Christie's
30	tex3807 146	quilt	Christie's
31	tex3915 52a	quilt	Christie's
32	tex4763 22	quilt	Christie's
33	tex6583 148	coverlet	Christie's
34	tex6735 88	quilt	Christie's
35	tex7061 163	coverlet	Christie's
36	tex7219 99	quilt	Christie's
37	tex7960 128	quilt	Christie's
38	8361 59	coverlet	Christie's
39	t.2004.87	coverlet	Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester
40	17206	coverlet	Bonham's
41	18105	coverlet	Bonham's
42	BA 3744	coverlet	York Castle museum, York
43	BA 593	coverlet	York Castle museum, York
44	BA 3045	coverlet	York Castle museum, York

45	BA 1205	quilt	York Castle museum, York
46	1940.339	coverlet	Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum, Gloucs.
47	ACM1950-257	coverlet	Hampshire County Art and Museum Service
48	ACM1956-53	banner	Hampshire County Art and Museum Service
49	2002-950	quilt	Hampshire County Art and Museum Service
50		coverlet	Jane Austen's House museum, Sussex
51		coverlet	Madingley Hall, Univ. of Cambridge Cambridge
52	1929-116	bedhangings	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
53	1975.124.1.3	fragment	Liverpool museum, Merseyside
54		fragment	Private owner PO7
55	1350873	coverlet	National Trust
56	1994-8-E	coverlet	Quilt museum, York
57	1996-14-A	coverlet	Quilt museum, York
58	1997-4-A	coverlet	Quilt museum, York
59	2000-11-A	coverlet	Quilt museum, York
60	2001-18-A	cot quilt	Quilt museum, York
61	2002-4-A	quilt	Quilt museum, York
62	2003-6-A	fragment	Quilt museum, York
63	2005-36-A	fragment	Quilt museum, York
64	2008-5-A	quilt	Quilt museum, York
65	2009-3-A	quilt	Quilt museum, York
66	2009-4-A	quilt	Quilt museum, York
67	chr 44	coverlet	British Quilt Heritage Project
68	chr 62	quilt	British Quilt Heritage Project
69	chr 63	quilt	British Quilt Heritage Project
70	chd 206	coverlet	British Quilt Heritage Project
71	2007-2-A	fragment	Private owner PO1
72	2008-1	quilt	Private owner PO1
73	1963/8-A	coverlet	Rachel K Shuttleworth coll. Gawthorpe. Lancs.

74	AF060710 434	coverlet	Woolley and Wallis auction
75		quilt	Private owner PO10
76	1964.1473	pocket	National Museums of Scotland
77	1972-658.120	quilt	Beamish Open Air museum, Co. Durham
78	1984.150	coverlet	Beamish Open Air museum, Co. Durham
79		coverlet	Bowes museum, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham
80		quilt	Bowes museum, Barnard Castle, Co Durham
81		quilt	Bowes museum, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham
82	8008	chairseatcover	Univ. for the Creative Arts, Farnham, Surrey
83	page 35	coverlet	Private owner Colby <i>Patchwork Quilts</i>
84	fig 124	coverlet	Private owner Colby <i>Patchwork</i>
85	1942.8	coverlet	Manchester Art gallery, Manchester
86		quilt	Royal Albert museum, Exeter, Devon
87	swy335	coverlet	British Quilt Heritage Project (BQHP)
88	swy408	quilt	BQHP
89	swy439	coverlet	BQHP
90	ead623	coverlet	BQHP
91	ead634	coverlet	BQHP
92	sad996	quilt	BQHP
93	nom1397	quilt	BQHP
94	nom1460	quilt	BQHP
95	nom1498	quilt	BQHP
96	nom1570	quilt	BQHP
97	han1641	quilt	BQHP
98	peh1812	quilt	BQHP
99	peh1863	quilt	BQHP
100	k1792	coverlet	Sevenoaks museum, Kent
101	2005-1-A	fragment	Colonial Williamsburg, VA, USA
102	m972.31	coverlet	McCord museum of Canadian History, Montreal

103		quilt	Levens Hall, Cumbria
104		curtain	Levens Hall, Cumbria
105	T.615.1996	cot quilt	V&A, London
106	T.201-1984	quilt	V&A
107	1475-1902	coverlet	V&A
108	T.19-1987	quilt	V&A
109	T.117-1973	quilt	V&A
110	T.417-1971	quilt	V&A
111	T.20-1938	cot quilt	V&A
112	circ263-1786	coverlet	V&A
113	T.102-1938	coverlet	V&A
114	T.32-2007	coverlet	V&A
115	T.9-1962	coverlet	V&A
116	T.25-1961	quilt	V&A
117	242-F-1908	bedhangings	V&A
118	13/1974/2	coverlet	Royal Albert museum, Exeter, Devon
119	T.312-1977	valance	V&A
120	T.37-1934	coverlet	V&A
121	T.632-1972	coverlet	V&A
122	tex3294 36	quilt	Christie's
123		coverlet	Hereford museum, Herefordshire
124	tex7219 70	quilt	Christie's
125	tex7960 116	quilt	Christie's
126	5996	coverlet	Christie's
127	18167 338	quilt	Bonhams
128	prn2178	coverlet	British Quilt Heritage Project (BQHP)
129	prn2185	coverlet	BQHP
130	shy2245	quilt	BQHP
131	shy2246	quilt	BQHP

132	kne2324	quilt	BQHP
133	kne2337	quilt	BQHP
134	kne2338	coverlet	BQHP
135	hax2836	quilt	BQHP
136	lon2938	quilt	BQHP
137	tro3250	quilt	BQHP
138	21/6/11 170	coverlet	Kerry Taylor Auctions
139	2008.040.0140	coverlet	International Quilt Study Center & Museum, NE
140	2007.029.0001	quilt	IQSCM
141	2006.056.002	coverlet	IQSCM
142	2005.053.0004	coverlet	IQSCM
143	2006.035.0001	coverlet	IQSCM
144	2008.040.0060	quilt	IQSCM
145	1941-1197	fragment	New York Historical Society, NY
146		coverlet	Private owner PO8
147		coverlet	Private owner PO8
148	1975.2	quilt	Metropolitan museum of Art, NY
149	41.285	quilt	Brooklyn museum, NY
150	35.439	coverlet	St Fagans National History museum, Cardiff
151	34.663.1	coverlet	St Fagans National History museum, Cardiff
152		coverlet	Private owner PO9
153	17/8/11 67	coverlet	Penrith auctions, Cumbria
154	2894	coverlet	Gunnersbury Park museum, London
155		quilt	Private owner PO13
156	M.86.134.21	quilt	Los Angeles County museum of Art, CA
157	31167	coverlet	Bonhams
158	T.285.1984	needlecase	V&A, London
159	A/FH/A/9/1/179	needlecase	Foundling London Metropolitan Archive
160	T.2012.7	quilt	Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester

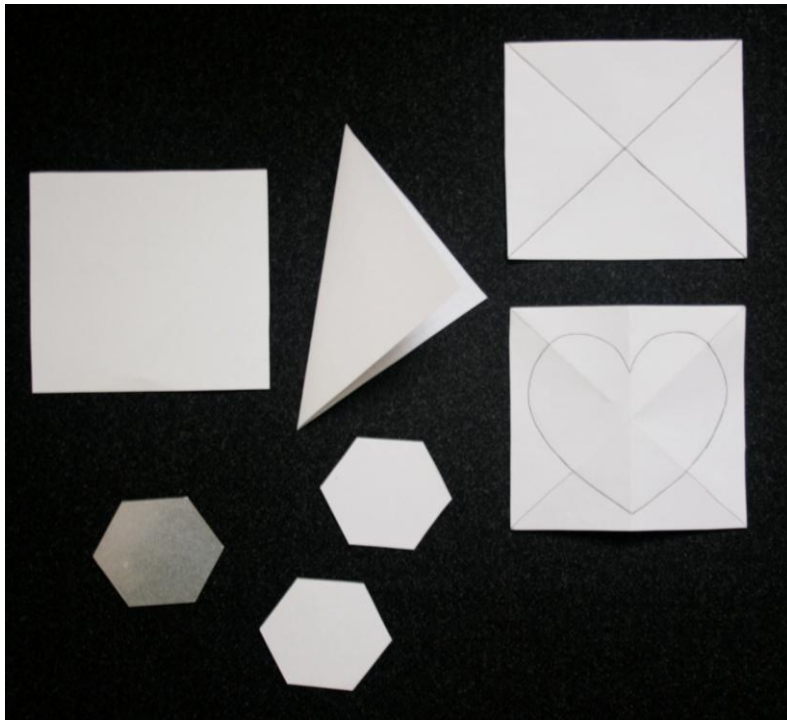
161		needlecase	Hampshire County Arts and Museum Service
162	1893.49.1	screen	Danvers Historical Society, Mass
163	poy2008	coverlet	British Quilt Heritage Project (BQHP)
164	keo3113	coverlet	BQHP
165	exr3462	quilt	BQHP
166	exr3507	coverlet	BQHP
167	exr3547	coverlet	BQHP
168	exr3549	quilt	BQHP
169	ins3436	quilt	BQHP
170	hed3658	coverlet	BQHP
171	hed3595	coverlet	BQHP
172	1960.1013.1,10pocket		Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur museum, DE
173	1960.0195	pocket	Winterthur museum
174	1960.0249	pocket	Winterthur museum
175	1983.0004	coverlet	Winterthur museum
176	1969.568	coverlet	Winterthur museum
177	1957.48	quilt	Winterthur museum
178	1969.575	quilt	Winterthur museum
179	1964.0139	quilt	Winterthur museum
180	1962.0100	quilt	Winterthur museum
181	1958.0108	quilt	Winterthur museum
182	1969.0566	quilt	Winterthur museum
183	1976.75	quilt	Wadsworth Atheneum, CT
184	1982.165	quilt	Wadsworth Atheneum, CT
185	134358	coverlet	Peabody Essex museum, MA
186	1926.934	coverlet	Society Preservation NewEngland Antiquities
187	64.6	quilt	National Soc. of Colonial Dames of America
188	1960.0250	pocket	Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur museum, DE
189	1967.01392	pocket	Winterthur

190	1966.0017	quilt	Winterthur
191	1968.0766	quilt	Winterthur
192	1969.0569	quilt	Winterthur
193	2009.0009	coverlet	Winterthur
194	2010.0018	coverlet	Winterthur
195		quilt	Private owner (exhibition at Winterthur)
196		coverlet	Los Angeles County Museum CA plus fragment
197	1987.63	coverlet	Metropolitan museum of Art, NY
198	38.59	coverlet	Metropolitan museum of Art, NY
199		coverlet	Private owner PO14
200	1946.110.1	quilt	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
201	1946.110.2	coverlet	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
202		quilt	Private owner PO11
203	1985.3.A	coverlet	Quilt museum, York
204		fragment	Private owner PO12
205		fragments	Private owner PO12
206		quilt	Private owner PO11
207	cat 2013	needlecase	Cora Ginsberg gallery, NY
208	cat 2013	pocket	Cora Ginsberg gallery, NY
209	348284.1-7	cushions (x6)	National Trust Cotehele
210	T.23.2007	coverlet	V&A, London
211	cat 2011-12	fragment	Cora Ginsberg gallery, NY
212	26.23.153	quilt	Old Sturbridge village, MA
213	26.67.41	pocket	Old Sturbridge village, MA
214	26.107.8	coverlet	Old Sturbridge Village, MA
215		coverlet	<i>PO Quilts and Quiltmakers covering CT</i>
216	26.10.170	coverlet	Old Sturbridge Village, MA
217	2012.8.A	coverlet	Quilt Museum, York
218		quilt	British Quilt Heritage Project

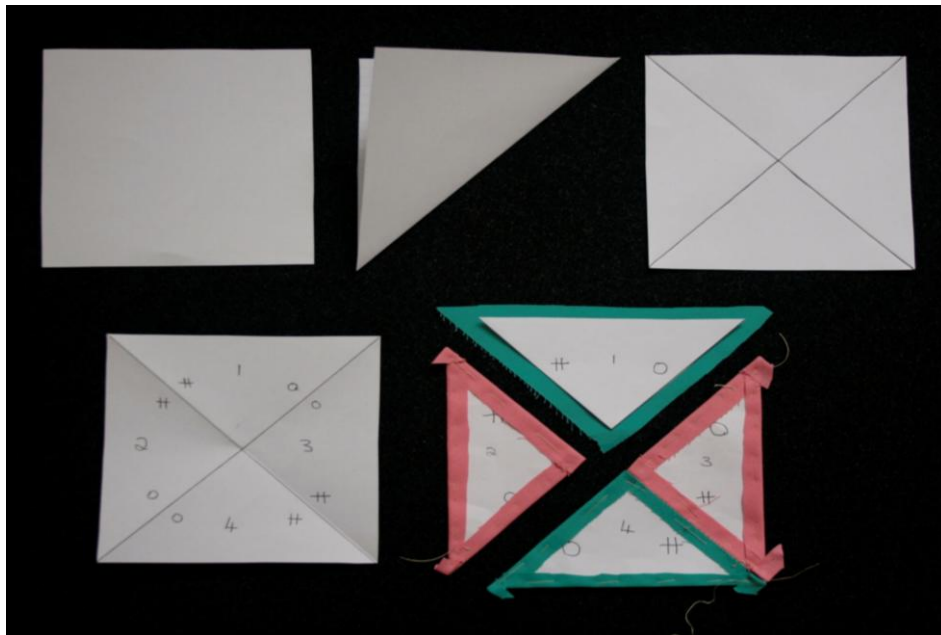
219	84.343	fragment	Newark museum, NJ, USA
220		coverlet	American Museum in Bath
221	70.163.1	quilt	Brooklyn museum, NY
222	70.163.2	quilt	Brooklyn museum, NY
223	T.76.1925	coverlet	V&A, London
224	BA3070	coverlet	York Castle museum
225	BA984	quilt	York Castle museum
226	T.382.1960	coverlet	V&A, London
227	T.399.1970	coverlet	V&A, London
228	T123.1938	coverlet	V&A, London
229	NEQM1991.13	coverlet	New England Quilt Museum, MA
230	NEQM2010.21	coverlet	New England Quilt Museum, MA
231	No entry		
232	OLNCM.2657	coverlet	Cowper and Newton museum, Olney, Bucks.
233	#802	quilt	PO Rhode Island Quilt Documentation Project
234	50-8A-106F	quilt	Quilt Index West Virginia Heritage Quilt Search
235	4A-7F-4BE	quilt	Quilt Index Heritage Quilt Project New Jersey
236	60.56	quilt	Daughters of American Revolution museum
237	74.290	quilt	Daughters of American Revolution museum
238	91.325	coverlet	Daughters of American Revolution museum
239	2001	quilt	Daughters of American Revolution museum
240	7970	needle case	Univ. for the Creative Arts, Farnham, Surrey
241	1964.56.T	coverlet	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service
242	1964.476.T	coverlet	Norfolk Museum and Archaeology Service

Appendix 4

Mosaic Patchwork Construction



Preparing paper templates a. From a square of paper folded diagonally both ways to be cut along the fold lines. b. From a square of paper with a figurative image to be cut around. c. By using a guide to cut a shape.



Preparing paper templates, marking guidelines before cutting the paper apart, wrapping the paper templates with fabric and basting down, using guidelines to line up pieces and whip stitching pieces together.

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UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS AND PAPERS

C. Dowdell, *The Fruits of Nimble Fingers: Garment Construction and the Working Lives of Eighteenth-century English Needlewomen*, published MA thesis, University of Alberta, Canada, (2010)

C. Humphrey, *Quilt Documentation Projects 1980-1989: Exploring the Roots of a National Phenomenon*, published MA thesis, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA, (2010)

K. Sharpe, *Conchology and Creativity: The Rise of Shellwork in Eighteenth century England*, unpublished MA dissertation in The History of Design, V&A/RCA, (1995)

K. Sneath, *Consumption, Wealth, Indebtedness and Social Structure in Early Modern England*, unpublished D.Phil thesis, University of Cambridge, (2008)



Fig.1 Patchwork quilt (detail), late-eighteenth century, linen and cotton, db160, collection of Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, T.2012.7. The quilt is simply made from twenty square and rectangular pieces of plate printed linen and cotton in a variety of sizes and motifs.



Figure 2 Patchwork quilt, side 1 (top), side 2 (bottom), early nineteenth century, db13, private collection. The quilt has patchwork on both sides and contains strips of cotton fabric showing frame and stamp marks cut from the end of the lengths of cloth dating from 1808 to 1813.



Fig.3 Patchwork bed furnishings, said to have been made in 1708, quilt (top), db103, curtain (detail, bottom), db104, cotton, collection of Levens Hall, Cumbria. The mosaic patchwork is made from Indian printed and painted cottons dating from late seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries.



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Available at www.norfolkmuseumscollections.org

Fig. 4 Set of patchwork bed furnishings made by Anna Brereton, 1801-1805, cotton, db52, Norwich Castle Museum, 1929.116. The nineteen-piece set is made from dress and furnishing cottons.

Image removed for copyright reasons

Available at The Textile Collection: University of the Creative Arts at Farnham on www.vads.ac.uk

Fig. 5 Patchwork chair seat cover, late eighteenth century, cotton, db82, collection of the University of the Creative Arts at Farnham, Surrey, 8008.

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Fig. 6 Patchwork cushions, late-eighteenth century, silk, db209, collection of National Trust, Cotehele, 348284.1c and d.

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Fig. 7 Patchwork pocket, late-eighteenth century, cotton and linen, db173, collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, DE, USA, 1960.0195.

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Fig. 8 Patchwork housewife or sewing case signed SH and dated 1754, silk and flannel, db158, collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, T.285-1984.

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Fig. 9 Half of a patchwork housewife or sewing case, 1767, silk and cotton or linen, db159, Foundling Hospital Billet Book, 1764-7, A/FH/A/9/1/179, London Metropolitan Archives.

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Fig.10 Patchwork banner made by E. Bythewood, 1814, cotton, db48, collection of Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service, 1956.53. The banner is made from plain, un-printed cottons



Fig.11 Patchwork chasuble, (top) and patchwork manipule, (bottom), 1720-30, silk and velvet, db9 and db10, Private collection.





Fig. 12 Mosaic patchwork (detail), front (top) and back (bottom), late-eighteenth century, cotton and linen, db4, Private collection. Patchwork made from fabric with generous seam allowances. See complete coverlet in fig. 33.



Fig. 13 Mosaic patchwork coverlet signed EH and dated 1718 in centre, silk, wool and linen, db59, collection of the Quilt Museum and Gallery, York, 2000.11.A. The coverlet contains geometric and figurative block designs.

Image removed for copyright reasons

Fig. 14 Mosaic patchwork coverlet, 1735-1770, silk, db47, collection of Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service, ACM 1950.257.



Fig. 15 Mosaic patchwork coverlet (detail), back of the work, showing paper templates and marked guidelines for construction, late-eighteenth century, cotton and linen, db163, Private collection.

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Available at www.vam.ac.uk

Fig. 16 Set of patchwork bed hangings, early eighteenth century, cotton, linen, fustian and silk, db117, collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, T.242.F-1908. The patchwork contains European and Indian fabrics stitched in a clamshell pattern. Fabric templates were used for the mosaic patchwork technique.



Fig.17 Mosaic patchwork quilt made by Anna Ruggles 1796 (details), selective cutting from printed fabrics, International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska – Lincoln, USA 2008.040.0140.



Fig.18 Fragment of mosaic patchwork coverlet (details), late-eighteenth century, selective cutting from printed fabrics, Private collection.



Fig.19 Seamed patchwork (details), front (top) and back (bottom), late-eighteenth century, db25, collection of Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, Cumbria, Cat.14. The seamed patchwork was made from second-quality cotton fabrics with scant seam allowances.



Fig. 20 Whip-stitch patchwork (detail), late-eighteenth or early nineteenth century, private collection.

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Fig.21 Inlaid patchwork and embroidered coverlet or hanging 1766, (top) and detail (bottom), wool, db100, collection of Sevenoaks Museum, Kent, k1972.

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Available at <http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/>

Fig. 22 Patchwork coverlet dated 1726, silk, cotton, linen and worsted, db102, collection of the McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal, M972.3.1. The patchwork coverlet contains appliquéd initials IN and date at the centre.

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Fig. 23 Patchwork coverlet 1765, silk, db8, Schloss Berlin Collection, Castle Doorn, Netherlands, 11198. The mosaic patchwork coverlet contains geometric and figurative designs including the large central British Royal coat of arms.

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Available at www.vam.ac.uk

Fig. 24 Patchwork quilt, 1690-1750, silk and velvet, db106, collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, T.201.1984. The mosaic patchwork coverlet includes additional appliquéd motifs.

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Fig. 25 Fragment of a patchwork and embroidered coverlet, 1700-1720, silk and velvet, db101, collection of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, VA, 2005-1-A. The heavily-embroidered mosaic patchwork includes added appliquéd and embroidered slips.



Fig. 26 Appliqué and Broderie perse appliqué coverlet, (top) and detail (bottom), c. 1790, cotton and linen, db232, collection of the Cowper and Newton Museum, Olney, Buckinghamshire, OLNCM.2657.

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Fig. 27 Patchwork coverlet signed MCB and dated 1797, cotton and linen, db113, collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, T.102.1938.

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Fig. 28 Patchwork coverlet, 1803-5, cotton and linen, db115, collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, T.9.1962.

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Fig. 29 Appliqué quilt dated 1795 (top) and detail (bottom), cotton and linen, db149, collection of the Brooklyn Museum, NY, USA, 41.285.

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Fig. 30 Appliqué and patchwork coverlet, 1810-20, cotton, db154, collection of Gunnersbury Park Museum, London, 2894.

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Fig. 31 Appliqué and patchwork coverlet made by Ann West in 1820, wool, db216, collection of Victoria and Albert museum, T.23.2007.



Fig. 32 Broderie perse appliqué coverlet, late eighteenth century, cotton and linen, db203, loan to the collection of Quilt Museum and Gallery, York, 1985.3.A.

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Fig.33 Patchwork quilt, late eighteenth century, silk, db109, collection of Victoria and Albert museum, T.117-1973. The quilt is made from scraps of silk and silk ribbon placed horizontally and vertically in rows with no attention made to colour position.



Fig. 34 Patchwork and appliqué coverlet, 1780-1810, cotton and linen, db2, private collection. The coverlet has a frame layout with a printed chair seat cover in the centre.



Fig. 35 Printed panel commemorating Princess Charlotte's marriage in 1816, cotton, private collection. Panels like this one were often used in patchwork for the centre of frame design layouts.



Fig. 36 Patchwork quilt inscribed 'mary robson her work done in the year of our lord 1801', cotton and linen, db66, collection of the Quilt Museum and Gallery, York, 2009-4-A. This simple, frame quilt was made using the whip-stitch patchwork technique.



Fig. 37 Mosaic patchwork coverlet, mainly late-eighteenth century with 1820s additions on edges, cotton and linen, db4, private collection. The patchwork has an all-over design layout. See details of the coverlet (front and back) in Fig. 12.



Fig. 38 William Hogarth *The Idle 'Prentice return'd from Sea, & in a Garret with a common Prostitute*, 1747, printed engraving, Lewis Walpole Library, New Haven, Conn., 747.09.30.072. Plate 7 from the print series *Industry and idleness* showing a rug on the bed.

Image removed for copyright reasons

Fig. 39 Fragments of Green and Yellow Rugs (detail), eighteenth century, collection of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur museum. The yellow dye in the green rug is fugitive leaving a bluish hue. It is thought that the yellow rug is a home-made colonial version of an imported rug.



Fig. 40 Back of a patchwork quilt, (detail), cotton, c.1810-20, private collection. The quilting design follows a frame layout.

No 93

THE
C A S E
OF THE
Quilt-Makers,

Sheweth,



H A T the Depriving the Quilt-Makers of the Liberty of Selling Printed Callicoe Carpets, will be a Detriment to the Government and the Woollen Manufacture; as appears from these following Reasons, *Viz.*

There are about 23000 Callicoe Carpets printed in Form *per Ann.* containing 184000 Yards, which Carpets must consequently consume 184000 Yards of *Kidderminster* or *Kendall* Stuffs, of our own Manufacture, us'd for the wrong Sides of Quilts, and 138000 Pound of ordinary Wool, which must otherwise be thrown away, being too short for Spinning, and fit for no other Use.

The Duty on Printing the same Callicoe Carpets amounts to 4600*l.* *per Annum*, besides the Duty paid by the *East-India* Company on the white Cloth at Importation; and these Carpets are never exported, as Callicoes printed for Garments, which are ship'd off daily, and have a considerable Drawback.

It is therefore humbly hoped, That the Honourable the Commons of *Great Britain* in Parliament Assembled will be pleased to grant a Clause in the Bill now depending in this Honourable House, to permit the Use of printed Callicoe Carpets; it being altogether impracticable to make them into Garments, or any other Household Furniture than Quilts, being printed in Form for that Use only; and it is plain, no printed Linen or Stuffs of our own Manufacture are so proper as Callicoe Carpets aforesaid, being lighter and warmer than any other Commodity to be manufactured in that Way. Besides, the taking away that Branch of Trade, will be the Destruction of Abundance of poor Families, that get a comfortable Livelihood by making the said Quilts.

Our Hardship will be greater than any other Dealers in Callicoe, by Reason the Duties we have paid for Printing the Callicoe Carpets now in our Hands, amount to several Thousand Pounds, (and are fit for no other Country, or Use, but the Quilts to which they are apply'd) our Stocks being larger than they would otherwise have been, if the People had not been made apprehensive that they should not quietly enjoy them. So that the Prohibiting the Sale of the same will be the inevitable Ruine of us and our Families, unless a Clause as aforesaid be obtained, or a very considerable Time allow'd to make up and dispose of our present Stocks.

Fig. 41 Anon., *The Case of the Quilt-Makers*, printed broadsheet, c. 1720, collection of Jonathan Holstein.

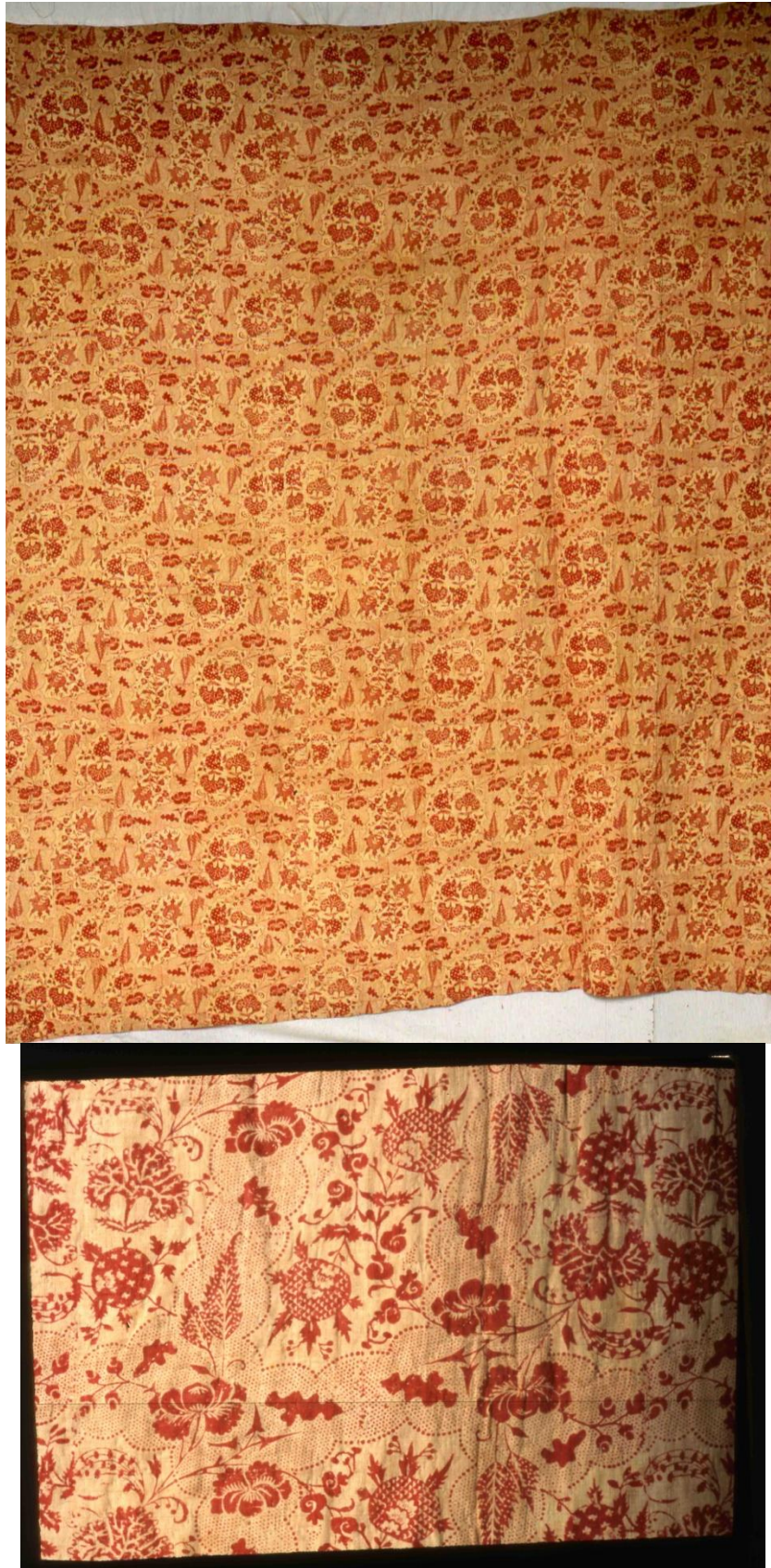


Fig. 42 Anne Hutton's quilt, (top) and detail (bottom), cotton, c.1715, private collection. This quilt was said to have been made from Indian chintz, but the fabric appears to be an early European printed cloth.



Fig. 43 ‘A description of the miseries of a Garreteer Poet’, from Coventry, F., *The History of Pompey the Little; or, The Life and Adventures of a Lap Dog*, (London, 1751), p. 219, Lewis Walpole Library, Conn., 751.02.00.01. The low bed in the illustration appears to be covered with a patterned, possibly patchwork, quilt.



Fig. 44 Tie-on pocket made from woven quilting (Marcella), early nineteenth century, private collection.

Image removed for copyright reasons

Available at www.vam.ac.uk

Fig. 45 Weft-loop woven counterpane 1809, cotton, collection of the Victoria and Albert museum, T.12-1935.

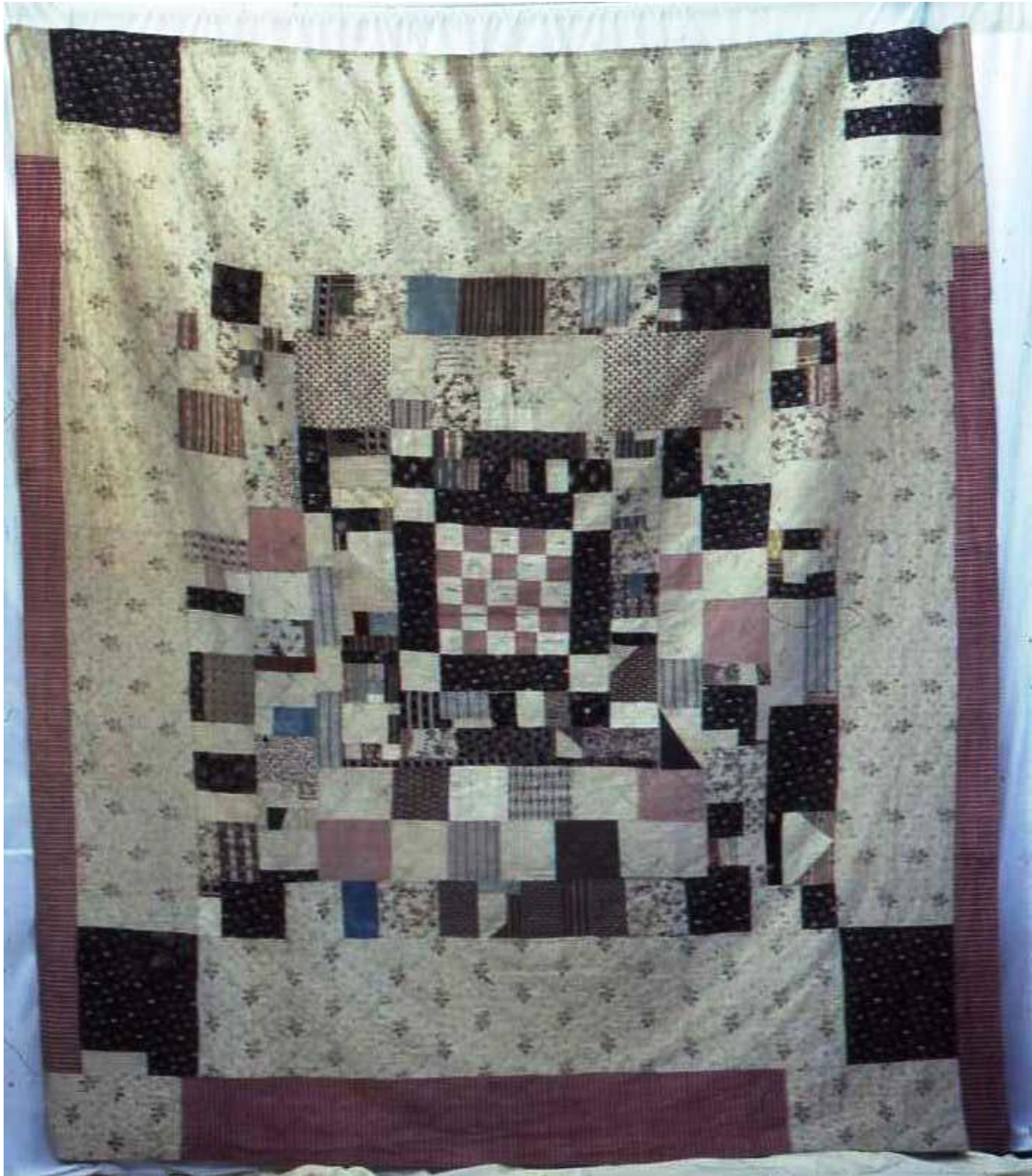


Fig. 46 Patchwork quilt made by Ann Cartwrite 1796, cotton and linen, db69, private collection

Image removed for copyright reasons

Available at www.npg.org.uk

Fig. 47 After John Hamilton Mortimer, *John Hamilton Mortimer with a student*, c.1765, oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery, NPG.234. The seat and back of the chair appears to be covered in a patchwork of squares.



Fig. 48 Patchwork coverlet (detail), late eighteenth century, db4, private collection. More than 120 different fabrics were identified in an area approximately 60 x 90cms (24 x 36ins).

Image removed for copyright reasons

Fig. 49 Taylor, J., *The Needle's Excellency, A new book wherin divers admirable works wrought with the needle*, 12th edition, (London, 1640), pp.33 and 34, Cambridge University Library. The designs for embroidery and lace are set on a square grid.



Fig.50 Mosaic patchwork coverlet, late eighteenth century, cotton and linen, db163, private collection.



Fig. 51 Fragments of a mosaic patchwork coverlet, late eighteenth century, cotton and linen, db7, private collection. This coverlet and the coverlet in fig. 50 have very similar designs with a central pot of flowers surrounded by a vine of flowers and with bunches of tulips in the corners of the centre. Both vines have birds and bows at the top and bottom. Two of the plate or 'dahlia' designs on the outer border are the same on each coverlet.



Fig. 52 Detail of Fig. 51 fragments of a patchwork coverlet, late eighteenth century, private Collection. The middle of the coverlet features a vine design with pink and white bows around the central detail.



Fig. 53 Silk embroidery picture, late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, private collection. The design includes a circular vine of flowers with a pink and white bow at the top

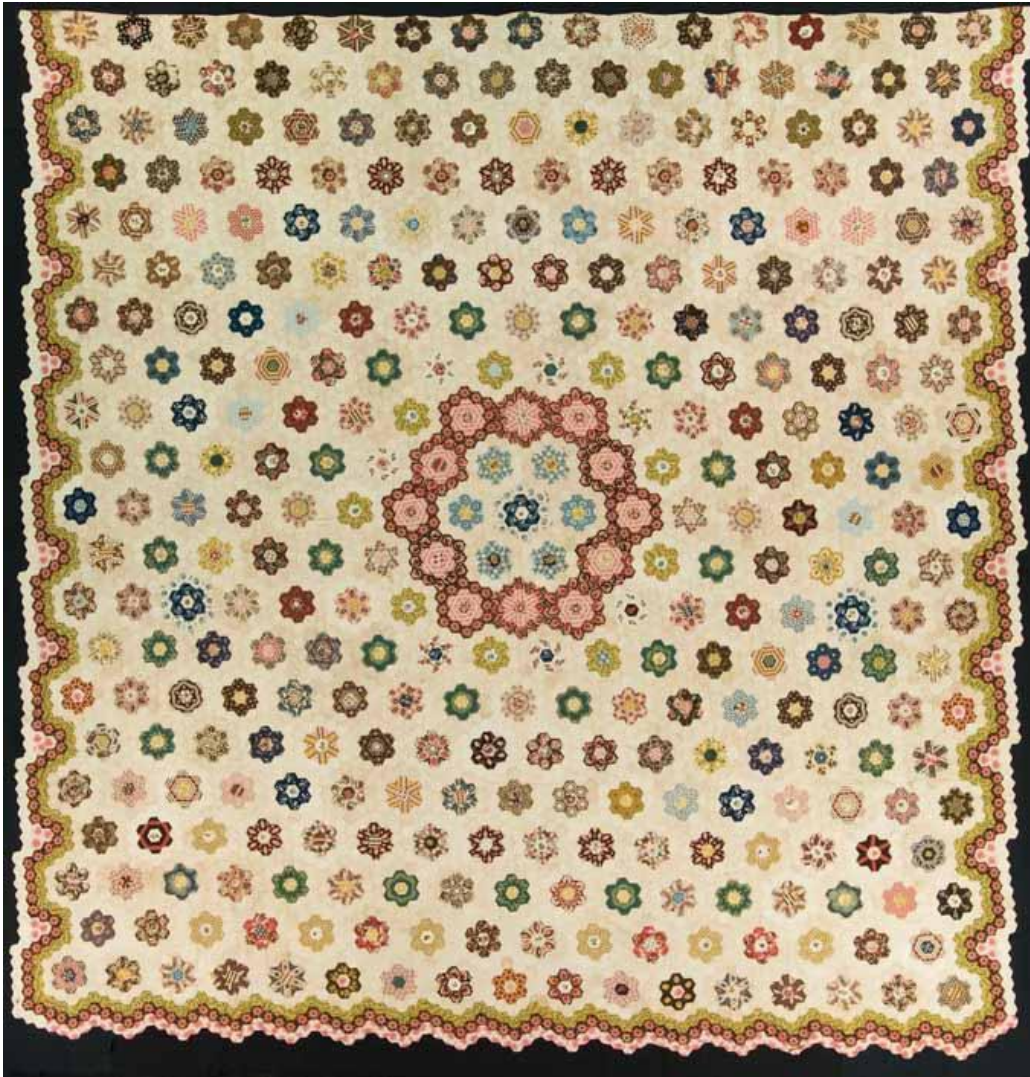


Fig. 54 Hexagon quilt made by Anna Ruggles dated 1796 (top) and (detail bottom), cotton, db139, collection of International Quilt Study Center, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, USA, 2008.040.0140. The quilt design of hexagon rosettes is finished with an offset edge on both sides.



Fig. 55 Mosaic patchwork coverlet (detail), late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, cotton, db, private collection. A complex 'dahlia' forms the centre of the frame design. It is surrounded by simple flower forms and hexagon rosettes.



Fig 56 Mosaic patchwork fragment made by Sarah Ann Chalk dated 1802 (detail), cotton, db, private collection. A complex centre design is surrounded by hexagons.

Image removed for copyright reasons

Fig. 57 Mosaic patchwork coverlet (top) and details (bottom), late eighteenth century, cotton, db46, collection of The Wilson Art Gallery and Museum, Cheltenham, 1940.339. The square patchwork blocks in the large, central rectangle are filled with complex, mainly circular, geometric designs.